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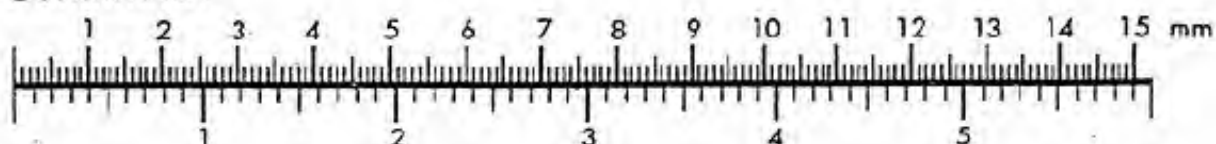
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THE ROUND TABLE, 1910 - 66

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Thesis submitted for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This thesis traces the history of the London Round Table group and of the *Round Table* magazine from their origins in 1909-10 until the decision to launch a "new" *Round Table* in 1966. It takes as its focus the ideas put forward by members of the group, in the *Round Table* and elsewhere, on a range of Imperial and international problems. It utilises knowledge of the authorship of *Round Table* articles in order to clarify the processes by which Round Table policy was made, and the rôle of different individuals within the group. It examines the rôle of the Round Table as a pressure group for Imperial reform and in particular its relationship to Empire federalism, seeking to elucidate the extent to which it was able to act coherently, and attempting to describe its aims, methods and influence. On the question of federalism, the thesis finds an inability to agree on details, but also a continuing belief in the necessity for constitutional unity until the late 1940s. It suggests that this belief was not entirely unrealistic. The thesis argues that, despite differences of emphasis, the Round Table was able to develop a distinctive ideology of Imperialism which was strongly supportive of the Imperial rôle yet also responsive to the need for change. It finds that the group was only briefly influential on government policy, under Lloyd George's administration, but it argues that the group saw its main purpose as that of influencing long-term opinion rather than short-term policy. It suggests that the group was able to play an important mediating rôle, between conservatism and radicalism, and between policy-making and opinion.

ABSTRACT: THE ROUND TABLE, 1910-66

Historians of British Imperialism have long been fascinated by the Round Table group. There are a number of reasons for this: the group's rôle as a movement for Empire federalism at a crucial stage in Anglo-Dominion relations, its development of a progressive ideology of Imperialism, its embodiment of metropolitan liberalism and its part in the demission of British power, its attempts to influence British foreign policy, and its reputation as a secretive "camarilla" exercising power by means of "backstairs influence". The history of the Round Table thus has a bearing on a number of important questions, including the nature of the metropolitan-colonial relationship and of the process of decolonisation, the relationship between British Imperial and foreign policy, and the rôle of pressure groups in the making of policy.

The origins and early history of the Round Table have been the subject of a number of studies, including two books, by Walter Nimocks and John Kendle. Both concentrate on the "imperial federation" aspect of the Round Table project, and argue that the Round Table "failed" because, within a few years of its foundation, it ran up against the brick wall of Dominion nationalism. Both also argue that after the First World War the Round Table lost its sense of cohesion as well as of purpose, and that some of its leading figures (especially Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr) abandoned Imperialism for a liberal internationalism. Sriram Mehrotra and Deborah Lavin have looked at the early Round Table from a somewhat different perspective, concentrating on Curtis's development of a philosophy of "Commonwealth" which helped to bring about progressive self-government in India and the dependencies, and



foreshadowed the creation of the multi-racial Commonwealth. A third historical tradition, which includes works by G R Allison and Carroll Quigley, has associated the Round Table with the policy of "appeasement", and suggested that in the 1930s the Round Table exercised a powerful influence on British foreign policy. Finally, Leonie Foster has looked at the history of the Australian Round Table groups from their foundation in 1910 until their demise in the 1970s. Taking as her focus the *Round Table* magazine she has elucidated the Australian Round Tablers' views on a wide range of questions, and argued that the *Round Table's* influence on public opinion was significant. On the question of Dominion nationalism she has argued that the Australians gave priority to Australian interests, but that the incompatibility between British and Australian interests only slowly became apparent.

This thesis is closest in model to Leonie Foster's work. It aims to provide a history of the London Round Table group, and takes as its focus the group's rôle as an editorial committee for the *Round Table* magazine. Utilising the manuscript sources left by a number of the original Round Tablers, and benefiting from access to the Round Table's office papers, it seeks to explain as well as to describe the Round Tablers' views on a wide variety of Imperial and international problems. It concentrates on the making of Round Table policy, on the rôle of individual members and the dynamics of the group. It is primarily an intellectual history, seeking to reconstruct the mentalité of the early Round Tablers, and to clarify the changes in their views as a result of confrontation with the challenges posed by Imperial and international politics. Nevertheless, it is also a political history, seeking to assess the Round Table's rôle as a pressure group, particularly in the

field of Anglo-Dominion relations, but also in other areas of policy. It tries to elucidate the Round Tablers' aims and methods and to describe their views of the political process, as well as attempting to answer the difficult question of influence.

This thesis is not a history of the Round Table organisation as a whole. It touches on the histories of the Dominion groups only where these seem relevant to the theme. There are a number of reasons, including limitations of space and the author's incompetence. The Dominion groups enjoyed a semi-autonomous existence, and the Canadian, South African and New Zealand groups are undoubtedly deserving of treatment along the lines followed by Leonie Foster in Australia. Again, this thesis covers the Round Tablers' views on British politics and on financial and economic questions only where this seems necessary. A similar set of reasons apply. The main focus of this thesis is on problems of international and Imperial politics. While the *Round Table's* coverage of financial and economic questions, in particular, is interesting and deserving of study, it is largely a separate topic. Perhaps one of the most striking conclusions might be the limited extent to which financial and economic considerations were held to influence British Imperial and foreign policy. One further limitation of this thesis is that it is primarily a study of the Round Table as a group, and not of individual Round Tablers. The members of the Round Table had many interests in common, but many interests apart. Again, it has seemed necessary to touch on these only where they have been relevant to the question under discussion.

The main part of the thesis is divided into ten chapters. The first gives a brief outline of the history of the group, and explores

the extent to which it sought to use the *Round Table* magazine as a vehicle for its collective views. An examination of contemporary and historical assessments of the group suggests some of the many ways in which the group has been viewed, and notes a wide divergence on the question of influence. A short section seeks to elucidate some of the questions raised, and to indicate possible lines of progress.

The second chapter looks in more detail at the origins of the Round Table in Milner's South African "Kindergarten", outlining Milner's political and intellectual legacy, and examining the "Kindergarten's" rôle in the unification of South Africa. A section on the "Imperial problem" seeks to explain why it was that the Round Tablers adopted an optimistic evaluation of Dominion nationalism, and suggests that, in the Edwardian period at least, Dominion nationalism and Imperial federalism generally worked in the same direction. A brief description of the Round Table's founding aims is followed by an assessment of its initial strategy. In contrast to the assumption of many historians, it is argued that the Round Tablers sought to bring about constitutional change by acting on public opinion rather than on a handful of well-placed politicians. Their notion of public opinion was admittedly limited and élitist, but it is suggested that this was by no means unusual. Again in contrast to earlier assumptions, the extent of disagreement between Curtis and others in the group is noted, even at such an early stage. A final section on the "original Mcot" looks at the personalities and careers of the early Round Tablers, suggesting some of the ways in which these affected the dynamics of the group and the extent of its influence.

Chapter Three looks at the Round Table "movement" and again emphasises the differences between Curtis and other members of the group. There was a broad consensus on the eventual need for some form of Imperial reconstruction, but this tended to disappear once the details of a scheme emerged. Curtis's attempts to produce a philosophy of Imperialism initially exacerbated the problem. Perhaps more importantly, there was a strong body of opinion in the group which rejected Curtis's hostility to Imperial co-operation, and which also believed that a longer-term strategy was necessary. Nevertheless, it is argued that it was the outbreak of war which put paid to Curtis's efforts, by magnifying the disagreements over co-operation, transforming Dominion attitudes and (eventually) removing the main argument for union. The 1917 Imperial Cabinet and Conference is seen as a pivotal episode, because it appeared at the time to signal a decisive step towards constitutional unity.

Chapters Four and Five examine the Round Tablers' ideas and their attempts to influence policy in the periods 1910-14 and 1914-22 respectively. It is argued that in the earlier period the Round Tablers were relatively marginal political figures, and that they achieved little success in influencing decisions in Britain. The group's inability to evolve coherent policies on some of the major issues of the day (such as tariff reform and Ireland) is noted, as is the initial conservatism of the group's views on India and the dependencies. By contrast, the years 1916-22 saw many of the Round Tablers moving into positions of considerable power. Nevertheless, the group was unable to make much progress on the central issue of Anglo-Dominion relations. Where members of the Round Table were influential was in smoothing the

course of Imperial retreat, in India, Ireland and Egypt. In all three cases, examination of Round Table views reveals a sudden shift in perspectives, brought about by a realisation of the weakness of Britain's position. Once some equivalent shift in British policy became inevitable, the Round Tablers helped to effect it by making out a persuasive case for change. They also helped to limit it, by portraying concessions as the natural outcome of British political ideals, and by insisting on full Imperial control of the process.

The rôle of the Round Table group between the wars is examined in Chapter Six. The need for some new strategy to bring about Imperial union is emphasised, but so too is the extent to which even Curtis's fiercest critics continued to believe in the possibility and necessity of some form of union. It is argued that, if anything, the group was more cohesive than before, despite the fact that individual members sometimes went off at tangents. The development of new spheres of influence is examined, and it is suggested that the range of the Round Tablers' influence was at least greater than before 1914.

Chapters Seven and Eight again look at the Round Tablers' ideas on specific problems of Imperial and foreign policy, and the extent to which they sought or were able to act as a pressure group. Their attitudes towards constitutional developments in Anglo-Dominion relations were again remarkably optimistic: indeed, they both anticipated and supported the new equality between Britain and the Dominions symbolised by the Balfour Report. The Round Tablers themselves interpreted these changes as a necessary reassurance to Dominion opinion, which would enable those who believed in Imperial unity to build on surer foundations. On India, Ireland and the Middle



East the Round Table again adopted a line of conciliation and cautious reform, which led the group to support British concessions, but not to argue for them in advance. "Commonwealth" came into its own as a progressive ideology of Imperialism, helping to disarm the critics of Empire but also to counteract the influence of "diehards" whom the Round Tablers saw as an equal danger. The practical implications of "Commonwealth" were few: it was an ideological tool, not a political programme.

The Round Tablers' belief in the necessity of Imperial unity in foreign policy brought them into conflict with much of British policy between the wars. Kerr in particular, but to a lesser extent the Round Table as a whole, now saw the United States as the key to an "Oceanic" alliance. The Round Table was highly critical of the Treaty of Versailles, doubtful of the value of the League, and hostile towards any British entanglement in Europe. From 1919 onwards the Round Table urged a combination of "Oceanic" withdrawal and conciliation towards Germany, which anticipated later "appeasement". In the mid-1930s the policy was still strongly supported by Dawson and Kerr/Lothian but not by other Round Tablers. Lothian changed tack at the time of the Austrian crisis, and the Round Table as a whole can safely be discounted as an influence on Chamberlain's policy.

Chapter Nine examines the Round Table's policy during and immediately after the Second World War, and concludes that the late 1940s saw a crisis of Empire in which many of the assumptions which underlay the early Round Table project were discarded. The idea of Imperial unity in defence and foreign policy was itself now rejected. The reason, it is argued, is that Britain now looked to America for the

framework of its security. There was a revival of Imperial purpose in Africa and the Caribbean, but the independence of India and the London Declaration (which the Round Table supported) were recognised as transforming the nature of the Commonwealth.

Chapter Ten studies the Round Table's views of the postwar world. Atlanticism is again an important theme, but there were few illusions as to the unequal nature of the "special relationship". The *Round Table's* coverage of decolonisation again highlights a vision of Commonwealth which was responsive to change, but still fundamentally conservative. A conflict between older and younger generations of Round Tablers appears especially in attitudes towards South Africa and Rhodesia. Re-examination of the value of the Commonwealth led to a new emphasis on diversity rather than unity, and on the Commonwealth's rôle as a "bridge" rather than as a "unit of power".

Two characteristics of Round Table thinking stand out: tenacity and adaptability. Both derived from a belief in the Empire/Commonwealth as a valuable end in itself, and one worth preserving. Through the *Round Table* and elsewhere, the Round Tablers sought to put forward an Imperial or Commonwealth view which was loyal to this higher unity and not just to British interests. This was unusual in Britain, and undoubtedly the main reason why the Round Table was not able to exercise a more continuous influence on British policy. Successive British governments were unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to translate the idealism of the Round Tablers' vision into a reality.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONSMANUSCRIPT SOURCES

Brand Papers	Brand Papers, Bodleian Library, MSS Brand (followed by box number)
Coupland Papers	Coupland Papers, Rhodes House, MSS Brit. Emp. s 403 (followed by box, file and fol numbers)
Curtis Papers	Curtis Papers, Bodleian Library, MSS Curtis (followed by box and fol numbers)
Dawson Papers	Dawson Papers, Bodleian Library, MSS Dawson (followed by box and fol numbers)
Grigg Papers	Grigg Papers, Bodleian Library, MSS Microfilm (followed by film number) (Microfilm copies of originals in Douglas Library, Kingston, Ontario)
Lothian Papers	Lothian Papers, Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, GD 40/17 (followed by box and fol numbers)
Milner Papers	Milner Papers, Bodleian Library, MSS Milner Dep. (followed by box and fol numbers)
Oliver Papers	Oliver Papers, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, MSS Acc. 7726 (followed by box and fol numbers)
RT Papers	Round Table Papers, Bodleian Library, MSS Eng. Hist. (followed by box and fol numbers)
RT (O) Papers	Uncatalogued papers transferred to Bodleian, 1994
Selborne Papers	Selborne Papers, Bodleian Library, MSS Selborne (followed by box and fol numbers)

All other manuscript sources cited in full.

JOURNALS

<i>Can Hist Rev</i>	<i>Canadian Historical Review</i>
<i>EHK</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>Econ HR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>Hist Journal</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>IA</i>	<i>International Affairs</i>
<i>J Contemp Hist</i>	<i>Journal of Contemporary History</i>
<i>JCPS</i>	<i>Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies</i>
<i>JICH</i>	<i>Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History</i>
<i>NZ J of Hist</i>	<i>New Zealand Journal of History</i>
<i>Proc RCI</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute</i>
<i>RT</i>	<i>Round Table</i>

## 1. THE ROUND TABLE IN HISTORY

*The Round Table* is the name given to a quarterly review of international, Imperial and Commonwealth affairs which first appeared in November 1910 and which, after a brief demise in the early 1980s, is still published today. Originally the magazine was an offshoot of a Round Table study movement, with branches in Britain, Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The purpose of these groups was to discuss Imperial problems and their solutions, using material supplied by the central London group, or "Moot". The Moot preceded both the magazine and the study groups, and created both with the "one and only purpose", as a fund-raising document of 1913 put it, of orchestrating a movement "to bring about the closer union of the British Empire".<sup>1</sup>

The Moot had its origins in "Milner's Kindergarten", the group of young British officials and administrators whom Lord Milner recruited after the South African war of 1899-1902. Initially just a close-knit fraternity of Oxford graduates, the "Kindergarten" (like the later Moot) had no formal constitution. There has often been some confusion as to its membership. Robert (later Lord) Brand recalled that the key members were himself, Lionel Curtis, John Dove, (Sir) Patrick Duncan, Richard Feetham, Lionel Hitchens, J F (Peter) Perry and Geoffrey Robinson (who in 1917 changed his name to Dawson). Other, more peripheral members were (Sir) Herbert Baker, John Buchan (later Lord Tweedsmuir), (Sir) George Craik, (Sir) William Marris, (Sir) James (later Lord) Meston and the Hon Hugh Wyndham (later

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1 "Round Table Statement", 1913, RT Papers c 778, fols 195-208.

Lord Leconfield).<sup>1</sup> Already the members of the "Kindergarten" called themselves "the Moot", partly by way of reference to the "Anglo-Saxonism" which they and Milner espoused, partly to indicate their rôle as a forum for the discussion of "moot", ie debatable and undecided, points. The name "Round Table", with similar connotations, also appears at this stage: in 1906 John Buchan (now back in England) paid tribute to "the brilliant minds of the Round Table".<sup>2</sup>

Under Milner's successor Lord Selborne, the "Kindergarten" - now joined by Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian) and (Sir) Dougal Malcolm - played an important part in the movement leading to South African unification. Even before this object was accomplished, the Moot was looking further afield. As Curtis wrote to Selborne in 1907,

"It begins to dawn on one that South Africa is a microcosm and much that we thought peculiar to it is equally true of the Empire itself . . . . When we have done all we can do and should do for South Africa it may be that we shall have the time and the training to begin some work of the same kind in respect of Imperial Relations."<sup>3</sup>

The following year, Curtis was more explicit about the new objective.

"It becomes more and more apparent every day to my mind that the various countries included in the Empire must come to some definite business arrangement for the support and control of Imperial defence and foreign policy or the Empire must break up."<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 Brand, Note on "Kindergarten", 9 Aug 1958, RT Papers c 867, fols 51-54. For biographical notes, see Appendix E. Robinson is hereafter referred to as Dawson throughout.
  - 2 Buchan, *The Lodge in the Wilderness* (Edinburgh, 1906), Preface.
  - 3 Curtis to Selborne, 18 Oct 1907, Selborne Papers 71, fol 127.
  - 4 Curtis to Milner, 31 Oct 1908, Milner Papers 195, fols 155-56.

At a series of meetings in South Africa and Britain during 1909-10, what Milner called "Curtis's scheme"<sup>1</sup> was given concrete shape, and the Round Table organization was born. Duncan, Feetham and Vyndham stayed on in South Africa and provided the core of the Round Table group there; Brand, Craik, Curtis, Dawson, Dove, Hichens, Kerr and Malcolm returned to England, where they constituted the nucleus of the metropolitan Moot. Besides Milner and Selborne, others who were active in the London group during its early years were Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Lovat, F S Oliver, Leo Amery, (Sir) Arthur Steel-Maitland, (Sir) Edward Grigg (later Lord Altrincham), (Sir) Reginald Coupland and (Sir) Alfred Zimmern.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the early members of the Moot saw the purpose of the Round Table as being to work towards the creation of "an Imperial government constitutionally responsible to all the electors of the Empire, and with power to act directly on the individual citizens".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless there were, from the beginning, different views as to how this objective should be attained, the powers which such a government should exercise, and the time-scale within which the movement's aims might be achieved.

Curtis was employed by the Moot to produce an argument for "closer union" which would be acceptable to the London and overseas groups. His drafts provided a focus for Round Table activities for the first half-decade. But he was ultimately unsuccessful. As H V Hodson (editor of the

1 Milner's diaries, 26 Aug 1909 and 4 Sept 1909, Milner Papers 80.

2 For a fuller list, see Appendix B.

3 Minutes of RT Meeting, 15 to 18 Jan 1910, Lothian Papers 11, fols 7-11.

*Round Table* from 1934 to 1939) has recently emphasised, Curtis's "federal aspirations" remained "an agenda to be discussed, not a plan to be promoted".<sup>1</sup>

Curtis never abandoned his faith in federalism. With few exceptions, his colleagues were and remained more ambivalent. Kerr/Lothian was a prominent advocate of federalism at various stages of an illustrious career, but, as Brand later emphasised, he "certainly never held the fixed unwavering faith of Lionel".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Moot as a whole was reluctant to abandon the ultimate objective which had inspired the creation of the *Round Table*, and an (undefined) "organic union" of the Empire appeared in statements of the Moot's aims as late as 1945.

Even while Curtis was trying to cajole his colleagues into supporting his own version of federalism, the *Round Table* magazine was enjoying a life of its own, as the vehicle for the Moot's opinions on a wide range of domestic, Imperial and international issues. After the First World War there were many discussions on whether and how to revitalise the *Round Table* "movement". But there was never any question of closing down the magazine. As an instrument for broadcasting "instructive ideas to the world at large"<sup>3</sup> the *Round Table* was invaluable.

Like *The Times* and the BBC, the *Round Table* aspired to a reputation for Olympian judgment. Potential subscribers to the magazine in 1947 were

- 1 Hodson, foreword to Curtis, *World War: Its Cause and Cure* (London, 1992 edition), p. ii.
- 2 Brand to Morrah, 26 Sept 1948, Brand Papers, box 171.
- 3 Curtis to Sir Arthur Salter (draft), 17 Apr 1930, Lothian Papers 251, fols 596-99.



promised "a clear true picture of world events" and "the factual background to news with authority and without party bias".<sup>1</sup> The provision of information was an important part of the magazine's rôle; but information was balanced by, and delivered in the context of, analysis and argument which, if seldom overtly partisan, was rarely uncommitted.

Until 1966, all articles in the magazine were anonymous. Almost half of each issue consisted of "chronicles": initially, from Britain and from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, where sections of the local Round Table groups acted as editorial sub-committees until the late 1960s. After the First World War, the *Round Table* published additional regular articles from correspondents in Ireland, India and the United States; after the Second, also from Northern Ireland (appended to the British "chronicle"), Pakistan (from 1947), Central Africa and (briefly) East Africa. In theory these "chronicles" were meant to be especially unpartisan, although in practice it was recognised that "no writer who is capable of independent thought is likely to be wholly free of bias".<sup>2</sup>

The remainder of each issue consisted of "policy" articles either written or commissioned by the Moot. In time, the leading article came to bear a special editorial imprimatur. Nevertheless, with a few exceptions which were introduced as such, all articles were hammered into an editorially consistent shape, by a judicious selection of contributors and a sometimes fundamental revision of the text by the editor and his committee. Unsolicited articles were rarely published, and there was no

1 Advertisement in *The Sunday Times*, 21 Sept 1947.

2 Morrah to L F G Anthony, nd [Aug 1959] (Rhodesias file), RI (O) Papers.

provision for readers to criticise views expressed in the publication through letters or other means. As a result, the magazine was able to convey an identity of viewpoint both as between different articles in the same issue and as between articles on the same subject over a period of time. As one editor put it, privately, in 1933,

"... the position is totally different to that of the 'Nineteenth Century' or any other review. Our articles are anonymous, and the Round Table expresses its own view in them, whoever writes them. It is this characteristic which gives us most of our influence".<sup>1</sup>

The core of the London group in the interwar period, as before, was the "Kindergarten". Grigg and (to a lesser extent) Coupland retained a strong interest in the work of the Round Table, but most of the other early non-"Kindergarten" members either drifted away or resigned. Their places were taken by new members. Percy Horsfall was recruited in the early 1920s; H V Hodson, (Sir) Ivison Macadam and (Sir) John Maud (later Lord Redcliffe-Maud) in the early 1930s; Lord Hailey and Vincent Harlow later in the decade; Henry (later Lord) Brooke and Dermot Morrah in the early 1940s; Sir Olaf Caroe, Nicholas Mansergh and Denzil Marris in the late 1940s; Sir Oliver (later Lord) Franks in the 1950s. Further members were recruited from 1960 onwards. Hodson later remarked that the names of his older colleagues "sound like a roll-call of the 'great and good' of the 1930s".<sup>2</sup> The description is equally apt in any subsequent decade. Certainly, the Moot contained many individuals who were eminent and influential in a wide variety of fields.

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1 Dove to Brand, 23 June 1933, Lothian Papers 276, fols 608-11.

2 Hodson, "The Round Table, 1910-81", RT, Oct 1981, p 308.

### Contemporary Assessments

The *Round Table* quickly established an enviable reputation as the leading review of Imperial politics, notable both for its informative "chronicle" articles and for the readability and judiciousness of its "policy" contributions. The Round Table archives contain many cuttings from other newspapers and magazines of all political shades (and from all parts of the Empire) commending individual articles or the magazine as a whole. The *Daily Chronicle* thought it "indispensable to all serious students of politics"; the *Nation* praised it as "careful, weighty and responsible"; and the *Fall Mall Gazette* declared that "there is no publication that surpasses it in clearness of thought and statement".<sup>1</sup>

One of the objects of the Moot in producing the magazine was to reach "the thinking and reading class of people who really make public opinion".<sup>2</sup> In this the Moot appears to have been relatively successful. J C Smuts told Curtis in 1921 that "the Round Table is the one thing of its kind which is read by nearly everyone who determines public policy or originates public opinion".<sup>3</sup> The Moot was especially keen to reach Dominion opinion, which it aimed to do at one remove, via the editors of local papers. Again there were grounds for claiming success. In Australia, for instance, 57 papers published in Victoria alone carried précis of *Round Table* articles

1 "Newspaper Criticisms of the Round Table Quarterly" [1917], RT Papers c 845, fols 131-34; of "The Round Table: Opinions of the Press throughout the Dominions" [1913], *ibid*, fols 175-79.

2 [Curtis,] "Memorandum" (Auckland, 1910), RT Papers c 776, fol 62.

3 Curtis to A J Glazebrook, 2 Sept 1921, RT Papers c 796, fols 134-40.



in 1918<sup>1</sup>; and in 1949 it was reported that many papers still relied on the *Round Table* both for information and opinion.<sup>2</sup>

The *Round Table* was, for its time, unique. It aspired, and was relied upon by many, to convey British views to the Dominions, Dominion views to Britain, and an Imperial or Commonwealth view to all. Its authority in foreign countries was important, also. The Moot was especially keen to secure a large circulation for the magazine in the United States. Curtis thought that its influence was "probably greater in Europe than in England", partly because (like *The Times*) it was believed to possess a peculiar insight into government thinking.<sup>3</sup> Some continental journals - such as *Le Monde Français* - regularly reprinted whole articles from each issue.

Soon after the appearance of the first *Round Table*, Rodolphe Lemieux, the former Canadian minister, wrote to G M Wrong that "there is an inner circle in that organisation - I know it, I feel it".<sup>4</sup> The anonymity of the *Round Table* perhaps added to contemporaries' interest in that "inner circle". Often, outside commentators saw more cohesion and homogeneity in the group than did the Round Tablers themselves; but, as D C Watt pointed

- 1 T H Laby, "Report of the Activities of the Round Table in Australia during 1918", June 1919 (Melbourne file), RT (O) Papers.
- 2 D K Picken to Curtis, 18 Nov 1949, *ibid*.
- 3 Curtis to Sir A Salter, 17 Apr 1930 (draft), Lothian Papers 251, fols 596-99.
- 4 Quoted by James Bayrs, "The Round Table Movement in Canada, 1909-20", *Can Hist Rev*, Vol XIXVIII (1957), pp 1-20.

out, "in a sense they had only themselves to thank".<sup>1</sup>

The word which most often came to contemporaries' minds when describing the Round Table, and particularly its "Kindergarten" members, was "idealist". This adjective was used not only in its philosophical sense, of a world-view in which ideas were seen as more powerful than material things - which was, indeed, the Round Tablers' belief - but also in the vernacular sense, of a character or disposition which was high-minded, disinterested, and determined to bring reality into conformity with ideals. J G Lockhart described them in 1928 as "full of the most excellent intentions", possessed of "tidy minds", and therefore "ever at war with the incorrigible intellectual sloppiness of the Briton".<sup>2</sup> Less charitable critics suggested that the Round Tablers were out of touch with reality, even crankish. The dowager Lady Milner, whose disapproval of her husband's protégés amounted almost to hatred, described them in 1939 as "highbrow noodles".<sup>3</sup>

"Idealism" was not always a guarantee of serious consideration, let alone a fair hearing. Nevertheless, it is striking how often the Round Tablers' opponents paid tribute to their intellectual abilities, and to their rôle in gingering up the Imperial debate. The Round Tablers were clearly a force to be reckoned with, in a way that Philpott Williams and

1 Watt, "The Men of the Round Table", *RT*, July 1969, p 326.

2 Janitor [J G Lockhart], *The Feet of the Young Men* (London, 1928), pp 171 and 173. At the time of his death, Lockhart was working on Curtis's biography.

3 Lady Milner to Grigg, 26 July 1939, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1005.

his Imperial Organization Society (which put forward proposals very similar to Curtis's) were not. Richard Jebb thought that "Curtis has achieved a wonderful success . . . in organising discussion of the whole [Imperial] question . . . and the Round Table keeps up its level admirably".<sup>1</sup> Henri Bourassa was more effusive. In his view, the Round Table was "the most active and interesting" imperialist group, and Curtis's work "even marked with a logical trend of reasoning . . . rarely to be found in Anglo-Saxon productions".<sup>2</sup> Similar appreciation of the Round Table's efforts to open up discussion was expressed by writers such as H Duncan Hall and Sir Keith Hancock, and by politicians such as Sir Robert Borden and Jan Smuts.

At the very least, then, contemporaries credited the Round Tablers with an important rôle in the debate on Imperial relations, that of providing (in Hancock's words) a "centre of reference, even when the reference is critical".<sup>3</sup> Was it possible to go further, and suggest that the Round Tablers, as a group, exercised real power? Some contemporaries clearly thought so.

The idea that the Round Tablers not only sought but exercised power behind the scenes existed even before many of the Round Tablers moved into positions of power under Lloyd George. Richard Jebb gave currency to the idea in his *Britannic Question* of 1913. But it was under Lloyd George that the myth really took hold. The Prime Minister himself remarked in 1921 that the Round Table

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1 Jebb to Fabian Ware, 2 June 1912, Jebb Papers.

2 Bourassa, *Independence or Imperial Partnership?* (Montreal, 1916), pp 5-6.

3 Hancock to Curtis, 23 Sept 1937, Curtis Papers 11, fol 146.

"is a very powerful combination - in its way perhaps the most powerful in the country. Each member of the Group brings to its deliberations certain definite and important qualities, and behind the scenes they have much power and influence".<sup>1</sup>

Lloyd George was perhaps not the most reliable witness, both because he was himself responsible for elevating the Round Tablers and because he was renowned for his volatility. Nevertheless, Sir Maurice (Lord) Hankey came to a similar conclusion, counting the Round Table "among the most influential" of contemporary "political congeries".<sup>2</sup> The Round Tablers' purchase on Lloyd George's administration was by no means universally welcomed. Sir Henry Wilson thought their influence "poisonous"<sup>3</sup>, while the *Morning Post* (which was unsure "whether the Round Table swallowed Mr Lloyd George or Mr Lloyd George swallowed the Round Table"<sup>4</sup>) described them as "a . . . palace-guard of idealists, who could be trusted by a sort of spiritual perversion to take a line injurious to British interests on every issue".<sup>5</sup> Joseph Caillaux took the opposite view, that the Round Table was a group of aristocratic nationalists, scheming "to restore simultaneously the tottering power of their caste and Great Britain's world supremacy".<sup>6</sup>

1 *Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After* (London, 1933), p 330.

2 S Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets, Volume 1* (London, 1970), pp 422-23.

3 R R James, *Memoirs of a Conservative* [J C C Davidson] (London, 1969), p 138.

4 *Morning Post*, 15 Nov 1922, cutting in RT Papers c 811, fol 29.

5 *Morning Post*, 12 June 1923, *ibid*, fol 30.

6 Caillaux, *Whither France? Whither Europe?* (tr K M Armstrong, London, 1923), p 5.

Once acquired, the Round Table's reputation as a "cabal" or "camarilla" or "junta" (the latter Sir Wilfrid Laurier's description) was hard to shake off. To some degree, it clung to the Round Tablers throughout the 1920s and '30s. It was given a new lease of life by the prominent support which Dawson and Lothian gave to the policy of "appeasement". Most contemporaries failed to distinguish between individual Round Tablers and the Round Table as a whole. Lord Davies, for instance, described the Round Table in 1935 as an "influential group", engaged in "deliberate sabotage" of the League of Nations and collective security.<sup>1</sup>

The notion that the Moot exercised a powerful "backstairs" influence was held by sympathisers as well as detractors. As late as the 1960s, the members of the Sydney group were comparing unfavourably their own influence with that of the London Moot<sup>2</sup>, while the New Zealand members apparently saw themselves "as reporting . . . to a group of wise and powerful men in London".<sup>3</sup>

This emphasis by others on the collective influence of the Moot naturally begs the question: how did the Round Tablers themselves assess their impact?

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- 1 Davies, "'Round Table' or World Commonwealth?", *Nineteenth Century*, Vol CXVII (1935), pp 47-55.
  - 2 D MacCallum, "The Round Table", 17 Mar 1965 (Sydney file), RT (O) Papers.
  - 3 L Beaton to Sir R Wade-Gery, 14 June 1965 (Beaton file), RT (O) Papers.



Thomas Jones noted in his diary in 1936 that "all the Round Tablers are good at collecting any credit there is going, like the Scotch".<sup>1</sup> This assertion is not easy to reconcile with the reticence of many of the leading Round Tablers. (One American journalist, sent to interview Curtis in 1949, found him "so overwhelmed with his own unimportance that there was almost no interview".<sup>2</sup>) Indeed, Round Tablers' claims of specifically Round Table influence were, in fact, few and far between. A fund-raising circular of 1920 made some more or less minor claims, ranging from the decision to include foreign affairs within the purview of the Imperial Conference in 1911 to the decision to call an Imperial War Cabinet and Conference in 1917.<sup>3</sup> A draft article by John Dove for the journal *Overseas*, written in 1924, made the rather more important claim that the Round Table was the author of the 1919 reforms in India.<sup>4</sup> Curtis asserted that his *Round Table* article of June 1921 "inspired the Irish Treaty . . . and led to the creation of the Irish Free State".<sup>5</sup> Curtis also claimed that he had not only popularised but discovered the term "Commonwealth" as a more fitting description for an Empire whose "function in the world was to promote the government of men by themselves".<sup>6</sup> Other claims of Round

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- 1 T Jones, *A Diary with Letters, 1931-50* (Oxford, 1954), p 173.
  - 2 Kathleen A Schiller, "Lionel Curtis - the Man", *Freedom and Union* (Oct 1949), pp 7-8.
  - 3 Draft of fund-raising circular, [1920,] Brand Papers, box 42.
  - 4 John Dove, "The Round Table: A Mystery Probed", 18 Dec 1924, *ibid.*, box 70.
  - 5 Curtis to Macadam, 6 July 1953 (ed ctee file), RT (O) Papers.
  - 6 Hancock, *Survey of Commonwealth Affairs, Vol 1: Problems of Nationality, 1918-36* (London, 1937), p 54.

Table influence are more difficult to find. Perhaps the Moot became embarrassed by the rather extravagant reputation which its members had acquired by the 1920s. Nevertheless, it is significant that the Round Tablers returned again and again to the lessons of South African unification, the one episode in which those who formed the core of the later Round Table acted as a coherent group, and for which they were almost universally given credit.

#### Historical Assessments

"Surely it is a waste of time to write a long book on the Round Table", Curtis exclaimed in 1953, after reading John Conway's Harvard thesis - a study of the *Round Table's* early coverage of Imperial organisation, Ireland and India.<sup>1</sup> What particularly galled him was Conway's suggestion that the *Round Table* had performed "volte-faces" on India and Ireland, and was therefore not to be reckoned an influence on government policy. Curtis thought Conway's work "positively misleading". He changed his mind after meeting Conway, and even suggested that he might make a useful *Round Table* correspondent.<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's comment was, indeed, uncharacteristic. Of all the Round Tablers, he was perhaps the most convinced of the historical value of their work. In his private correspondence, references to "the future historian"

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1 Conway, "The Round Table: A Study in Liberal Imperialism" (Harvard PhD thesis, 1951).

2 Curtis to Macadam, 6 July 1953; Curtis to Morrah, 5 Aug 1953 (ed ctee file), RT (O) Papers.

abound. In 1933, for instance, he criticised Lothian's decision not to attend the Toronto Commonwealth Relations conference: "Consider for a moment the view which some historian of our movement 50 years hence would take".<sup>1</sup> The Round Tablers were generally conscientious in saving records for posterity. Initially it was thought "that our history can be satisfactorily written only by one of our own body, who knows the movement from the inside".<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately none of the Moot had the time to devote to such a task, although in 1981 Hodson wrote an article for the *Round Table*, which remains the most authoritative introduction to the subject.<sup>3</sup>

Conway was the first of a number of North American scholars to investigate different aspects of the Round Table's history. D C Ellinwood followed him in 1962 with a study of Milner's "Kindergarten" and the movement for imperial federation to 1919. Although generally sympathetic, Ellinwood concluded that the strength of Dominion nationalism made the group's "failure" inevitable. Like Conway, he emphasised the central rôle of Milner.<sup>4</sup> G R Allison submitted a more wide-ranging thesis in 1964, again placing the Round Table firmly in the tradition of "new imperialism", but emphasising its influence on the policy of "appeasement" (an influence which he condemned vigorously).<sup>5</sup> Like Conway and Ellinwood, Allison relied

1 Curtis to Lothian, 15 Apr 1933, Lothian Papers 263, fols 245-50.

2 Morrah to Amery, 3 Dec 1951 (ed ctee file), RT (O) Papers.

3 Hodson, "The Round Table, 1910-81", RT, Oct 1981, pp 308-33.

4 Ellinwood, "Milner's Kindergarten, the British Round Table group and the Movement for Imperial Reform" (Washington PhD thesis, 1962).

5 Allison, "Imperialism and Appeasement: A Study in the Ideas of the Round Table Group" (Harvard PhD thesis, 1964).



entirely on published sources. All three scholars were unsure of the composition of the group, and included many non-Round Tablers.

By the early 1960s it was clear that no member of the Moot would be able to undertake a history of the movement, and the Round Table archives were opened to scholars. Ironically, one of the first to benefit was Carroll Quigley. Quigley had already conceived an intense dislike of the Round Table, which he saw as the "inner core" of a Rhodesian-Milnerite "secret society", with branches all over the English-speaking world. In 1949 he had written a book on the "Anglo-American Establishment" (not actually published until 1981) in which he put forward this view, and asserted that the Round Tablers were "persons whose lives have been a disaster to our way of life".<sup>1</sup> A brief rummage through the Round Table files merely confirmed his views. Consequently, he published an article (re-)affirming his belief that the Round Table was "founded by Milner . . . to create an immense nexus of influence and patronage", and claiming that it was "unquestionably the most influential group in British political life for at least 30 years".<sup>2</sup> A second, unpublished article made the more specific claim that the Round Table was "the most significant aberrant influence on the foreign policy of Chamberlain and Halifax", and that the group favoured a large measure of "colonial appeasement" as a step towards "partnership" with Nazi Germany.<sup>3</sup> Macadam

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- 1 Quigley, *The Anglo-American Establishment from Rhodes to Cliveden* (New York, 1981), p xi.
  - 2 Quigley, "The Round Table in Canada, 1908-38", *Can Hist Rev*, Vol XLIII (1962), pp 204-24.
  - 3 Quigley, "The African Issue in the Appeasement Program, 1937-39", copy in Brand Papers, box 171.

thought him "crazy".<sup>1</sup>

In 1968 another American, Walter Nimocks, published a more sober study of Milner's "Kindergarten", making extensive use of the Milner and Dawson papers, as well as more limited use of the Lothian and Round Table collections. Nimocks was able to paint a more vivid picture than Ellinwood. But in basic interpretation he differed little: he saw the Round Tablers primarily as Milnerites, and again emphasised the "failure" of the movement, "with only the quarterly magazine to mark the fact that it had ever existed". In contrast to Quigley, Nimocks believed that "as a group" the Round Table "had little influence on Edwardian affairs".<sup>2</sup> Nimocks presumably believed that the Round Table had even less influence thereafter, since his narrative stopped abruptly in 1914.

The Canadian historian John Kendle took the story further, with his study of *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union*, published in 1975. Kendle had already thrown new light on the early history of the movement, in two articles on Curtis's activities in New Zealand in 1910, another on the Koot's espousal of UK devolution, and a chapter on the group's preparations for the 1911 Imperial Conference.<sup>3</sup> In his longer study, Kendle made extensive use of the available sources in Britain and Canada to

1 Macadan to Brand, 27 Aug 1962, *ibid.*

2 Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men: The Kindergarten in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (London, 1968), pp 219 and viii.

3 Kendle, "The Round Table, New Zealand and the Imperial Conference of 1911", *JCPS*, Vol III no 2 (1965), pp 104-17; "The Round Table Movement, Lionel Curtis and the Formation of the New Zealand Groups", *NZ J of Hist*, Vol 1 no 1 (1967), pp 33-50; "The Round Table Movement and 'Home Rule All Round'", *Hist Journal*, Vol XI no 2 (1968), pp 332-53; *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences, 1887-1911* (London, 1967), ch 7.

produce a well-balanced and still valuable account of the Round Table's early years. As his title suggests, Kendle's main interest was in the fate of the Round Table's original, federal, purpose, although he included chapters on "Home Rule All Round" and on India, and a somewhat laconic chapter on "the twilight years" after the First World War. In his view, the Round Table "ceased to be a movement and *The Round Table* ceased to be a quarterly devoted primarily to empire-commonwealth concerns" after this point.<sup>1</sup>

Although he conceded that Dominion nationalism "can be over-emphasized", Kendle attributed the Round Table's "failure" primarily to the fact that the members of the London group "never really understood dominion feelings". Had they done so, they would have realised that their "major goals, especially imperial federation . . . were probably hopeless aspirations from the beginning". (The same view has recently been put forward by John Eddy and Deryck Schreuder: the "ultimate failure of 'constructive imperialism' was as hopeless as the earlier British mercantile imperial attempts to forge a north-west passage through winter ice".<sup>2</sup>) Perhaps the most valuable legacy of the Round Table was to have "helped demolish the prejudice against granting self-government to India".<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Kendle, *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto, 1975), p 274.
  - 2 Eddy and Schreuder, "The Edwardian Empire" in *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism* (London and Sydney, 1988), p 45.
  - 3 Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, pp 301-03.

In an earlier article, Kendle had suggested that the Round Table was, during its early years, an "extremely powerful" group.<sup>1</sup> In his longer work, however, he concluded that

"the influence of the movement . . . has often been exaggerated . . . . On occasion, of course, especially before 1914, the movement, particularly the London group, did have some influence in governmental circles in Great Britain and the dominions . . . . Even so it must be realised that very few of the Round Table members were really influential - in positions of power or with long-time access to powerful men".

Kendle made this statement "only in the context of imperial affairs", and he allowed that a "somewhat different assessment might be required if foreign affairs and the problem of appeasement were being examined".<sup>2</sup>

Since the appearance of Kendle's study, no historian has attempted to dispute the main lines of his argument or to provide yet another "long book" on the Round Table movement as a whole. But the Australian Round Table groups have been the subject of a fascinating study by Leonie Foster which, as Kendle wrote in the foreword, provides "a model for similar work in other parts of the Commonwealth". Foster's work differs from previous studies of the Round Table not only in tackling the history of the local groups, but also in its historical scope - tracing the groups' history from 1910 as far as their demise in the 1970s - and in treating the *Round Table* magazine rather than the "movement" as the primary focus of Round Table activities. Foster emphasised that "Australian and British interests have never been identical", and that in the last resort "the [Australian]

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1 Kendle, "The Round Table Movement: Lionel Curtis and the Formation of the New Zealand Groups", p 33.

2 Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, p 305.

articles reflected the primacy of the Australian national interest". Nevertheless, as her study ably demonstrates, there was a broad middle ground in which "native and imperial loyalties mingled happily".<sup>1</sup>

Deborah Lavin's essays on Lionel Curtis have brought vividly to life the character, ideas and methods of the Round Table's leading founder.<sup>2</sup> In Lavin's view, Curtis "propagated the multinational Commonwealth and was . . . the first to explore in any detail the ideal of multiracial Commonwealth" - although the "modern Commonwealth of national entities has turned out to be a far cry from his dream of a supra-national state".<sup>3</sup> Lavin's work casts doubt as well as light on some of the previously accepted nostrums of Round Table historiography, by demonstrating the extent to which "Round Table" work was often Curtis's alone, and the result of some very non-Milnerite influences.

Andrea Bosco and the Lothian Foundation have stimulated reconsideration of the federalist aspects of the Round Table's history by sponsoring a wide range of publications asserting their continuing relevance and (if applied to Europe rather than the Commonwealth) practicability. Bosco's own epistemological studies have credited Curtis

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- 1 Foster, *High Hopes: the Men and Motives of the Australian Round Table* (Melbourne, 1986), foreword, p 4 and *passim*.
  - 2 Lavin, "History, Morals and the Politics of the Empire: Lionel Curtis and the Round Table" in J Bossey and P Jupp (eds) *Essays Presented to Michael Roberts* (Belfast, 1976); "Lionel Curtis and the Idea of Commonwealth" in F Madden and D K Fieldhouse (eds) *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth* (London, 1982); "Lionel Curtis and Indian dyarchy" in Andrea Bosco (ed) *The Federal Idea, Volume 1* (London, 1991).
  - 3 Lavin, "Lionel Curtis and the Idea of Commonwealth", p 97.



and Lothian with a coherent federalist philosophy, and an effective critique "of international anarchy and of the appearance of totalitarianism within the nation state". In Bosco's view, the Round Table was mainly significant as "the link between imperial and international federalism". Indeed, at times Bosco appears to argue that Lothian, at least, was a federalist first and an imperialist only second.<sup>1</sup>

Curiously, one aspect of the Round Tablers' history which has received little recent attention is "appeasement". An exception is Kathryn Tidrick's book on *Empire and the English Character*, in which she (like Allison and Quigley) counts all the Round Tablers as "appeasers". Historians who are reluctant to endorse the conspiratorial view of the "Cliveden Set" are, she suggests, perhaps guilty of "succumbing to the same judiciousness which afflicted its supposed members".<sup>2</sup>

### Some Problems

Contemporary and historical assessments of the Round Table have raised a number of important questions, not all of which have found entirely satisfactory answers. Perhaps the most important is, still, the question of the nature and extent of Round Table influence. Allison, Quigley and others have provided one answer; Nimocks and Kendle another. The latter certainly seems more plausible. Yet there remains something

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1 Bosco, "National Sovereignty and Peace" in J Turner (ed), *The Larger Idea* (London, 1988), pp 108, 121 and 122 (Lothian "regarded federalism as a form to fill with a content"). For Bosco's other works and the Lothian Foundation's publications, see bibliography.

2 Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character* (London, 1990), p 311 note 15 (generally, pp 271 ff).

elusive about the Round Table's influence even in its "movement" stage, as well as a wide field of unexplored endeavour thereafter. As Foster has very pertinently suggested,

"The criteria for 'failure' need closer examination. How can failure of a movement be measured? No results? Unexpected results? Collapse? Length of existence? The ultimate failure of the Round Table members to achieve closer union does not write them off. In the midst of failure they had their successes".<sup>1</sup>

Influence is, of course, very difficult to quantify even in the case of a single individual. In the case of a movement, a group and a magazine it is well-nigh impossible. The question needs to be broken down if there is any hope of reaching even a tentative answer.

To take the "movement" aspect of the Round Table enterprise first, most historians believe that it was inevitable that the Round Table should have failed. The Round Tablers themselves clearly thought it was not. On what grounds did they base this view? And why did they think that the component parts of the Empire had sufficient interests in common to justify common policies and even common institutions? Again, contemporaries and historians have generally assumed that the Round Table's claim to be a "study" organisation was just a tactical ruse: that, as J G Lockhart put it, "the answers were already written out and reposing in Lionel Curtis's pocket".<sup>2</sup> But was this really the case? Or was imperial federalism itself a "moot" point? If so, in what ways and for what reasons did other Round Tablers disagree with Curtis? And to what extent did the Round Tablers' views develop after 1910?

1 Foster, *op cit*, p 162.

2 Janitor [J G Lockhart], *The Feet of the Young Men* (London, 1928), p 177.

The answers to such questions might help to provide answers to other ones, more immediately germane to the "failure" of the Round Table "movement". At what point, or points, did the Round Tablers themselves recognise imperial federation to be impracticable: before the First World War, during, or after? Did they attribute "failure" primarily to the views of the Dominions, and of the Dominion Round Table groups in particular? What of British views? And what of changes in those circumstances which had led them to embark on the Round Table enterprise in the first place? If the Round Tablers did realise that their movement had "failed", we still need to establish whether they saw "failure" as permanent or merely temporary. This in turn will help to establish whether they re-assessed their aims, or just the means by which they hoped to achieve those aims.

Already it is clear that the dynamics of the Moot itself must be re-examined. Contemporaries generally assumed that it was possible to speak of a Round Table group identity. On the other hand, Nimocks and Kendle have both suggested that that identity faded after the First World War. The problem deserves closer attention. What were the sources of Round Table cohesion before the First World War, and to what extent did they change after? Was agreement easier in some areas than in others, and, if so, why? How important was Round Table membership to individual members of the Moot? Conversely, what did individual members bring to the group? Were some members more dominant than others? And what light can the history of the Moot throw on the careers and intellectual development of individuals who were, in many cases, worthy of study in their own right?

Such questions concerning the internal dynamics of the Moot help to clarify the larger questions concerning the Round Table's activities as a pressure group. Whom did the Round Tablers seek to influence? Were they



primarily concerned with changing political attitudes and policy in the Dominions or did they hope to exert influence in Britain itself? On what level did the Round Tablers seek to operate? Did they seek to bring about a "revolution by dinner party", as John Turner so pithily put it?<sup>1</sup> In other words, were they primarily interested in using "backstairs" influence to change the attitudes of politicians and officials? Or were they primarily concerned to influence "opinion", that amorphous and elusive, yet all-important construct of modern democracy? In either case, how did they seek to do so? And in what contexts and circumstances were they successful?

The Moot's primary activity, certainly after 1916 or so, was running the *Round Table* magazine. The views put forward will therefore help to throw light on the Moot's rôle as a pressure group, and on the circumstances in which it felt either compelled or able to act in such a capacity. Where, then, did those who wrote for the *Round Table* diverge from British policy, and where did they seek to modify it? Where, on the other hand, did they seek to explain and to justify British policy? To the extent that the *Round Table* put forward a coherent view of the Empire/Commonwealth, what light did it throw on the nature of British imperialism in general? Was there, indeed, a distinctive "Round Table" version of imperialism?

Questions of influence are, of course, important; but they are not necessarily all-important. Intentions are often more interesting than results; certainly they help to illuminate the thought-processes of previous generations, to whom in some respects we are so close, yet who, in other respects, inhabited a very different world.

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1 Turner, "Lord Lothian and His World" in *The Larger Idea* (London, 1988), p 5.

## 2 THE FOUNDERS

The origins and early history of the Round Table have been covered in some detail by Ellinwood, Nimocks, Kendle and other historians.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to cover a certain amount of old ground in order to emphasise, clarify or dispute points which have an important bearing on the subsequent history of the Round Table.

### Alfred Lord Milner

Lord Milner was sometimes referred to as the "leader" of the Round Table, more often as its "chairman". He was especially venerated by the "Kindergarten" - who referred to him as "H.E." or "his triple X" - but he was also responsible for introducing many of the non-"Kindergarten" members of the Noot, and he organised most of the finance. His rôle in the early organisation was therefore pivotal. He also provided much of the intellectual inspiration behind the Round Table movement. The extent to which the Round Tablers later developed and even departed from Milner's ideas is, of course, one of the questions raised by the history of the movement.

Milner was a man of "very deep prejudices"<sup>1</sup>, whose opinions were largely fixed. At their heart was a "British Race - Patriotism" which

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<sup>1</sup> Vincent Massey's impression after meeting Milner in 1912: Claude Bissell, *The Young Vincent Massey* (Toronto, 1981), p 95.

claimed "that this is the law of human progress, that the competition between nations, each seeking its maximum development, is the Divine Order of the world, the law of Life and Progress".<sup>1</sup>

Towards non-Europeans Milner's attitude was one of paternalism, a belief in "the inherent superiority of the European in certain qualities of brain and character". This allowed him to embrace the "Rhodesian" ideal of "equal rights for every civilised man", in the belief that few non-Europeans would ever attain the level of "civilisation" of Europeans.<sup>2</sup> Towards non-British Europeans, Milner's attitude was one of greater fear. He regarded international politics as a "racial" struggle, and imperial politics as a contest between the "English" or "British" on one hand, and the Irish, Québécois and Afrikaners on the other. As he wrote to Curtis in 1908, after a visit to Canada,

"I am more than ever impressed . . . by the fact that the only real and permanent tie of Empire is race . . . . [that] without a strong and enduring British leaven, a large mass of the population to whom British traditions, British history, and the British language are dear, it is impossible permanently to retain any great white community in political connection with the mother country".<sup>3</sup>

Like his friend and Oxford contemporary Sir George Parkin - the "bagman of Empire" for whose lecture-tours of the 1890s Milner arranged much of the finance - Milner saw the consolidation of the white Empire as a

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- 1 Milner, "The Key to My Position", printed in *The Times*, 27 July 1925 (often referred to as Milner's "Credo").
  - 2 Milner's last speech in South Africa, 13 Feb 1925, published in *Cape Times*, 14 May 1925 (cutting in Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002).
  - 3 Milner to Curtis, 1 Dec 1908, Curtis Papers 1, fol 231.

question of "National Union".<sup>1</sup>

It followed from Milner's national Darwinism that the nation, not the individual or class, was the fundamental "organic" social unit. He supported a limited programme of social reform, state intervention and "National Efficiency" on the grounds that "there can be no enduring Empire without healthy, thriving, manly people at the centre".<sup>2</sup> But he also believed that national power was a precondition of national prosperity, and that "this country must remain a great Power or she will become a poor country". Like Captain Mahan, another important influence on the Round Tablers, Milner likened national power to reserve cash in a bank, which, although rarely necessary to use, determined the effectiveness and even survival of a struggling business.<sup>3</sup>

Given his experience as an unsuccessful parliamentary candidate (in 1885), his belief in the existence and priority of a "national" view, and the contemporary political ineffectiveness of the "new" imperialism, it was perhaps inevitable that Milner should conceive what was at times a violent dislike towards the British political system. He viewed party politics as "a pure struggle of ins and outs without any inner meaning . . . whatever": a system which gave "ultimate power" to "ignorant people", who would

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- 1 Milner, "Mr Chamberlain and Imperial Policy", in *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (Associated Newspapers Ltd, London, 1914), p 205. The description of Parkin was Lord Rosebery's.
  - 2 Milner, *Constructive Imperialism: Five Speeches* (London, 1908), p 69.
  - 3 Milner's speech to the Manchester Conservative Club, 14 Dec 1906, *Imperial Unity: Two Speeches* (London, 1907), p 7; see also Milner's speech to the Canadian Club, Vancouver, 9 Oct 1908, *The Nation and the Empire* (London, 1913), p 307.

inevitably be unreceptive to "trained knowledge and complete information".<sup>1</sup> His conception was fundamentally bureaucratic. "Organisation was his watchword", and he thought that mismanagement "may do much more harm than murder".<sup>2</sup> In his view, "administration" was "government in the true sense of the word".<sup>3</sup> He believed in government by "experts", and perhaps only fellow-experts could recognise expertise. He held little faith in party politicians being able to do so.

Milner's dislike of the British political system was well formed even before his appointment as High Commissioner of South Africa in 1897. Nevertheless, his experience in that post gave a bitter personal twist to his views. The Unionists were lacking in that quintessential Milnerite quality, "thorough"; and they were divided by Joe Chamberlain's campaign for Tariff Reform. The Liberals, on the other hand, were revitalised by opposition to the war - for the outbreak and prolongation of which Milner was, perhaps rightly, held responsible - and to Milner's subsequent use of "Chinese slavery". Milner resigned while the Unionists were still in power but his name remained anathema to Liberals.

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- 1 Milner to Lady Edward Cecil, 16 May 1903, quoted in Cecil Headlam (ed), *The Milner Papers: South Africa, Vol II* (London, 1933), pp 446-9.
  - 2 Rt Hon H A L Fisher, quoted in "At New College", *National Review*, Vol 107 (Nov 1936), p 611; Milner, *Bustle* (Froebel Institute, Oxford, 1897), p 5.
  - 3 Milner to Sir Lewis Michell, 13 May 1904, Milner Papers 188, fols 53-54.
  - 4 For a damning indictment, see Eric Stokes, "Milnerism", *Hist Journal*, Vol V (1962), pp 47-60.



Although he recognised that he was not cut out to be a "successful politician in the ordinary sense", Milner was determined to remain a force in politics: "to work quietly in the background, in the formation of opinion rather than in the exercise of power".<sup>2</sup> The extent to which he attempted to build up a caucus of his own is debatable. His main work lay in propagandising for the "new" imperialism, in laying the groundwork for future changes. Nevertheless, this work involved him in acting as an unofficial "fixer" for the imperialist movement.

Milner's personal generosity was legendary. After his death, his widow was to complain that the number of his dependents was "legion".<sup>3</sup> But the main source of funds for Milner's imperialist nexus was the Rhodes Trust, of which he was the most active Trustee.<sup>4</sup> Large amounts were found for the South African Association and Progressive Party, and for Sir Percy Fitzpatrick. Others who benefited included Halford Mackinder and Leo Amery.<sup>5</sup> Amery had been the *Times* war correspondent in South Africa, and was now editing the *Times History* of that war. He was also writing various articles in favour of national service and Tariff Reform.<sup>6</sup> Defeated as a

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1 Milner to Dawkins, 21 Apr 1904, quoted in Headlam, *op cit* Vol II, p 550.

2 Milner's speech at Johannesburg, 31 Mar 1905, *The Nation and the Empire* (London, 1913), p 90.

3 Lady Milner to Grigg, 8 June 1925, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002.

4 Milner to Alfred Beit, 9 Sept 1914, Milner Papers 469, fols 138-9.

5 Details of payments in Milner Papers, boxes 468-477.

6 Reprinted as *The Problem of the Army* (London, 1903) and *The Fundamental Fallacies of Free Trade* (London, 1906).

Unionist candidate in 1906, Amery was funded by the Rhodes Trust to act as a one-man "imperial secretariat" for Milner, and to continue his work organising the Compatriots' Club.<sup>1</sup> The latter was a sort of Milner Appreciation Society started by Amery in January 1904, with branches in both England and South Africa. Its object was "to advance the ideal of a United British Empire". It petered out sometime around 1911, when Amery obtained the safe Unionist seat of Birmingham South.<sup>2</sup>

### The "Kindergarten"

The most significant group of Milner's protégés, who would form the backbone of the South African Compatriots and later of the Round Table, was his South African "Kindergarten". The origins of this group go back to 1900-01, when Milner, preparing for his rôle as Governor of the two defeated republics, began recruiting staff. Deluged by an "enormous number of applications"<sup>3</sup>, Milner fell back on the criteria of personal, family and college connections as the simplest way of building a cohesive, loyal team.

All graduates of Oxford, and all, save Duncan and Dawson, of New College, the "Kindergarten" shared a contempt for the outlandish Boers and

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1 Amery to Milner, 30 Mar 1908, Milner Papers 476, fols 6-8.

2 A copy of the "Rules of the Compatriots Club", including membership lists for England and South Africa, is in Lothian Papers 4, item 279. The Club was revived as a parliamentary group in June 1923 with Amery as chairman; his diaries mention Compatriots' Club dinners as late as October 1947, but in its second incarnation the Club was apparently not an active pressure group. See Julian Barnes and David Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries* (London, 1980 and 1988) *passim*.

3 W Baillie Hamilton (Colonial Office) to Lord Ralph Kerr, 21 June 1903, Lothian Papers 453, fol 2.

uneducated Britons in whose country they landed.' They stuck together, sharing houses, holidaying and sporting together, and organising "Oxford dinners". Above all, they were united by a common veneration for "H E", Lord Milner. John Buchan wrote that "loyalty to Milner and his creed was a strong cement which endured long after our South African service ended".<sup>2</sup> A L Rowse has suggested that "homo-eroticism" was an element in Milner's relationship with the "Kindergarten".<sup>3</sup> This can be neither proved nor disproved. What is certain is that service with Milner would be a useful "apprenticeship" in public affairs"; and that a large part of Milner's attraction was his "unflinching devotion" to the imperialist cause.<sup>4</sup>

After his retirement, Milner was pessimistic about the prospects for British interests in southern Africa: his friend and one-time amour Margot Asquith reported that "he has got it on the brain that we shall lose South Africa".<sup>6</sup> The "Kinde" shared some of Milner's pessimism and they

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1 See, eg, Perry to W P Ker, 23 Oct 1900, printed in E C Hodgkin, "The Kindergarten", *The Times*, 13 July 1974.

2 John Buchan, *Memory Hold the Door* (London, 1940), p 99.

3 A L Rowse, "Lionel Curtis: the Prophet" in *Glimpses of the Great* (London, 1985), p 342.

4 R S Rait to Lord Ralph Kerr, 26 June 1903, Lothian Papers 453, fol 3.

5 Hichens, quoted in "At New College", *National Review*, Vol 107 (Nov 1936), p 608.

6 Margot Asquith, *Autobiography, Vol II* (London, 1922), p 85.

recognised that self-government "will give the Dutch a majority".<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the "Kindergarten" still expected a predominantly British South Africa. One means by which this was to be achieved was through British immigration, and the other members of the "Kindergarten" gave Dove much support in his work for the Land Settlement Board. At one point there was even a "Kindergarten" committee to supervise land settlement schemes. A handbook for suitably wealthy settlers was later run off as a preliminary issue of the *Round Table*.<sup>2</sup> The other means was the unification of South Africa. A disunited South Africa was an economically backward South Africa, rendering large-scale immigration impossible. As Selborne put the argument later, "there can be no expansion without stability; and there can be no stability without Federation. Q E D."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, with Lord Selborne's approval and encouragement, the "Kindergarten" set to work as a "deadly secret Ctee" to promote the cause of federation. Milner was persuaded to arrange £1000 initial finance for the project, from the Rhodes Trust.<sup>4</sup> Curtis combined the knowledge and ideas of the group in a memorandum outlining the case for unification. This memorandum, after amendment and approval by Selborne and the

1 Kerr to Lord Ralph Kerr, 28 Jan 1906, Lothian Papers 454, fol 7.

2 *The Round Table: Preliminary Issue*, 25 July 1910, copy in Rhodes House Library. The committee consisted of Dove, Wyndham, Duncan, Feetham, Ferry and Dawson, but it appears to have been inactive: see the letter from the last four to Curtis, 23 Aug 1909, in Lothian Papers 11, fols 42-5.

3 Selborne to Duncan, 30 Nov 19.07, quoted in L M Thompson, *The Unification of South Africa, 1902-10* (Oxford, 1960), p 80.

4 Dawson's diary, 1 Sept 1906, Dawson Papers 12.

5 Milner to Robinson (Dawson), 21.9.06, Dawson Papers 61, fols 38-45.

"Kindergarten", was published in July 1907.<sup>1</sup>

The "Selborne Memorandum", as it became known, was a forceful document, calculated to stir white South Africans of both "races". An introductory chapter (which, as ex-President Steyn of the Orange Free State noted, was "full of . . . bad history"<sup>2</sup>) asserted the common "Teutonic" origins of both British and Afrikaners. The Memorandum went on to describe the deleterious effects of disunion, with particular emphasis on southern Africa's railway and fiscal development (for which Brand and Kerr provided much useful material), and on "Native and Labour Questions". Much was made of the need to provide overwhelming force for the "defence of civilisation" against the "uncivilised masses", and of the trouble caused by "5 or 6" different "native" and "Asiatic" policies. Finally, the Memorandum held out to white South Africans the possibility of expansion northwards - the development of "vast and vacant" lands, even as far as Lake Tanganyika, "in whatever degree this great region is a country where white men can work and thrive and multiply".<sup>3</sup>

The Memorandum had no great immediate effect. It was only with the downfall of Jameson in the Cape elections of January 1908 that Afrikaner politicians awoke to the possibilities inherent in pursuing the cause of

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1 See Thompson, *op cit*, pp 67-70, for Curtis's intrigues with Jameson and F S Malan to get the memorandum published.

2 *Ibid.* p 77.

3 Basil Williams (ed), *The Selborne Memorandum* (Oxford, 1925): pp 109 and 112 ("defence of civilisation . . ."), 140 and 145 ("vast and vacant . . ."). The Memorandum was first published, with an appendix by Kerr on "South African Railway Unification", as Cd 3564, 1907.



Union. From then on events moved with astounding rapidity, with Botha, Smuts, Merriman and others arguing for full unification, not just federation.<sup>1</sup>

The "Kindergarten" expanded its work in a variety of directions. Curtis and Feetham, Selborne's nominees in the Transvaal upper house, maintained the pressure there. Dawson converted the *Star* and *The Times* to vehicles of propaganda for the movement, and Curtis wrote regular articles for the *Morning Post*. With funding from Abe Bailey and Lord Salisbury, Curtis set about organising "Closer Union Societies", of which there were more than sixty by March 1909. Kerr - who in May 1907 had turned down Selborne's offer of "Federation work", on the grounds that it might prejudice his chances of getting a good appointment with a colonial government<sup>2</sup> - was persuaded to edit a new monthly magazine, *The State*, devoted to the aim of unification and again funded by Bailey. In February 1909 a draft constitution was ready, and the "Kindergarten" threw its efforts into ensuring a safe passage through the four colonial legislatures (Southern Rhodesia having opted out by this stage). In Natal, by now the only British-dominated colony, these efforts were particularly crucial.

In later years, members of the "Kindergarten" received a great deal of credit as "the men who conceived and carried through the Union of South Africa".<sup>3</sup> At the time, Selborne congratulated Curtis in particular:

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- 1 The "Kindergarten" acquiesced in the rejection of federalism. Indeed, Curtis later claimed that his research had shown a unitary constitution to be preferable: Curtis to Kerr, 21 July 1910, Lothian Papers 1, fol 64.
  - 2 Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 20 May 1907, Lothian Papers 456, fol 25.
  - 3 "Frederick Scott Oliver", *The Times*, 5 June 1934; cf John Dove, "The Round Table: A Mystery Probed", 1924, Brand Papers, box 70.

"although you had many splendid helpers, the main credit for this work must always be yours".<sup>1</sup> In Leonard Thompson's view, this was clearly a case of confusion between the midwife and the mother. Nevertheless, the "Kindergarten's" rôle in South Africa became a fundamental element in the Round Table's mystique, important both in projecting the group as a significant and effective political force, and in providing it with a model for future action.

### The Imperial Problem

By the time of the foundation of the Round Table, the prospects for Imperial integration seemed, in many ways, bleak. Chamberlain's campaign for imperial preference had already run into the sands of domestic opposition; and the various schemes for improved consultation and co-operation associated with Sir Frederick Pollock's informal "committee" had likewise failed to make significant headway.<sup>2</sup> The Colonial Conference of 1907 resulted in changes which were more symbolic than substantial, the British Government this time leading the sceptics.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the relations

1 Selborne to Curtis, 6 Feb 1909, RT Papers c 876, fol 62.

2 On the "Pollock Committee", see M G Miller, 'The Continued Agitation for Imperial Union, 1895-1910' (D Phil thesis, Oxford, 1981) chs 1 and 2; J E Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences* (London, 1967), ch 4.

3 Kendle, *op cit.*, ch 5.

between Britain and the Dominions (as they were now called) seemed to be increasingly intractable as a result of a growing awareness of distinct and even divergent interests and priorities.<sup>1</sup>

"Colonial Nationalism" was the subject of a seminal work by Richard Jebb, published in 1905, in which the distinctness of colonial identities was forcefully asserted.<sup>2</sup> Historians John Eddy, Deryck Schreuder and others have demonstrated the extent to which Jebb "exposed an immutable rock of emerging social reality", which was bound to make all subsequent centralising efforts a "grand ballet of incomprehension".<sup>3</sup> Such an eventuality was by no means clear at the time, however.

In an essay published in the same year as his *Studies*, Jebb denied that there was any necessary opposition either between colonial nationalism and imperial unity, or between co-operation and federation.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, it was possible to read Jebb's *Studies* as proof of the "new imperialist" thesis that the colonies of settlement, having achieved autonomy in their

1 Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment* (Penguin edn, London, 1974), pp 22-29; Paul Hayes, "British Foreign Policy and the Influence of Empire, 1870-1920" in R F Holland and G Rizvi (eds) *Perspectives on Imperialism and Decolonization* (London, 1984), pp 105-113.

2 Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* (London, 1905).

3 J J Eddy and D M Schreuder (eds), *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism* (London and Sydney, 1988), pp 88, 51; cf J D B Miller, *Richard Jebb and the Problem of Empire* (London, 1956) and *The Commonwealth in the World* (London, 1958), pp 29-32.

4 Jebb, "Imperial Organization", pp 332-50 of C S Goldman (ed), *The Empire and the Century* (London, 1905).

domestic affairs, were now ripe for some share of the responsibilities and burdens of Imperial affairs. This appears to have been the "Kindergarten's" reading of Jebb's book: Kerr for one thought it "extraordinarily good" and Jebb "absolutely right in his general thesis".<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate failure of proposals for Imperial federation is apt to lend their promoters an air of naiveté, even irrelevance. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind the "ambivalent" and "transitional" nature of colonial nationalism, which Eddy and Schreuder have themselves emphasised.<sup>2</sup> It was transitional from a state of colonial dependence, not of "organic" unity. Therefore, as Kerr asserted, its

"vigour, self-confidence, even its somewhat aggressive independence, is immeasurably more valuable to the Empire than the apathetic irresponsibility of the 'colonial days'".<sup>3</sup>

What colonial nationalism was "transitional" to was, of course, a "moot" point.

People in the Dominions themselves rarely envisaged a future outside the Empire. Curtis found the Colbertian view - that colonies were like fruit which, when ripe, would drop from the imperial tree - to be prevalent amongst British politicians. But he contrasted this with the situation in the Dominions.<sup>4</sup> Historians have tended to confirm this aspect of

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1 Kerr to Lord Ralph Kerr, 1 Apr 1906, Lothian Papers 454, fol 16; cf Curtis to Jebb, 31 Dec 1906, Jebb Papers. Jebb's book was quoted in the *Selborne Memorandum* B Williams, *op cit*, pp 90-92. For the later argument between Jebb and the Round Table, see below, pp 96 and 130-31.

2 Eddy and Schreuder, *op cit*, p 53 and *passim*.

3 [Kerr,] "The Conference and the Empire", *RT*, Nov 1911, p 412.

4 Curtis to Sir Courtney Ilbert, 2 Sept 1916, RT Papers c 798, fols 251-53.

Curtis's judgment. Sir Keith Sinclair and Carl Berger have illustrated the extent to which, in New Zealand and Canada, the growth of local nationalism was bound up with a continuance of imperial loyalty. Both have argued that, in Sinclair's words, local imperialism "was itself an expression of an emergent . . . nationalism".<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly this was the case; but, for it to be so, there must have been a strong presumption that the Empire provided opportunities for national growth and the pursuit of national interests.

Imperial loyalty was, of course, often expressed in terms of ethnic identity. Milner saw "race" as the glue which would hold Britain and the Dominions together. This view was also expressed by members of the "Kindergarten", such as Brand and Malcolm. On the whole, however, the "Kindergarten" was far more ambivalent than Milner on the question of race. The imperialism of Curtis and Kerr, in particular, was primarily cultural rather than racial. This did not mean that it was any the less fervent. Kerr asserted in 1920 "that the future of the world depends upon the gradual recognition by the rest of the world of the fundamental principles which lie at the heart of Anglo-Saxon civilisation".<sup>2</sup> What is important is that Kerr saw "Anglo-Saxon" values as exportable and universal. While he could agree with Milner, therefore, that pan-Britannic nationalism would assist Imperial unity, he was not convinced that the converse was true, that the existence of other "races" would work in favour of disintegration.

The "Kindergarten's" experience in South Africa was in this respect important. Initially, Milner's young men saw British-Afrikaner relations

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1 Sinclair, *Imperial Federation* (London, 1955), p 47; Berger, *A Sense of Power* (Toronto, 1970).

2 Kerr to Curtis, 9 June 1920, Lothian Papers 208, fols 255-58.



in "racial" terms, like Milner himself. But the alliance which they developed with Botha, Smuts and others induced a more optimistic assessment of the balance of forces in South Africa than was the case with Milner. This optimism extended also to Quebecois nationalists such as Bourassa. "I don't believe that he would be opposed to the Imperialism of people like Curtis and myself", Kerr wrote of Bourassa in 1910.<sup>1</sup>

Probably the most fundamental reason for the "Kindergarten's" sanguine assessment of colonial nationalism was a belief in what was often referred to as "the pressure of facts". Like most Edwardian imperialists, the "Kindergarten" saw international relations in terms of a constant, uncompromising struggle for national existence. In a hostile, insecure and Hobbesian world, the individual Dominions would find themselves "classed with Chile and Peru". Per contra, by remaining within the Empire but contributing towards its costs in return for a share in its direction, the Dominions would have the power to secure fully their own interests and integrity.<sup>2</sup>

#### "Curtis's Scheme"

The idea of a new organisation to campaign for Imperial union was first mooted in 1907. By March 1909 the "Kindergarten" had evolved a definite scheme, which Curtis elaborated in a letter to Amery. In its essentials, it was clearly and consciously modelled on the "Kindergarten's" previous activities. A memorandum was to be drafted, then thrashed into an acceptable form by a small "editorial committee". Curtis was again to act

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1 Kerr to E J Kylie, 16 Dec 1910 (Kylie file), RT (O) Papers.

2 [Kerr,] "The Question of Policy", [1910,] Lothian Papers 14, fol 275.

as draughtsman, travelling round the Dominions "as a sort of prospector". Simultaneously, a chain of publications would be set up, with a London office under Kerr "to feed them with pictures and stuff". Finally, a wider circle would be organised in each of the Dominions, to "master the information placed at their disposal" and orchestrate propaganda for the adoption of the necessary reforms.<sup>1</sup>

Curtis and other members of the "Kindergarten" (Brand, Craik, Dawson, Kerr and Marris) spent the summer of 1909 in England drumming up support for their project, which Milner generally referred to as "Curtis's scheme". Others involved included Amery, Jameson (who was temporarily in Britain), Milner's secretary Arthur Steel-Maitland, Robert Martin Holland (later Holland-Martin), a banker and friend of Dove, and F S Oliver, author of a biography of Alexander Hamilton, which, Milner wrote, "put me and many others under a permanent obligation to you".<sup>2</sup>

The meetings between Milner, the "Kinde" and their new contacts do not appear to have been minuted, but their conclusions were summarised in a printed document. This stated that Britain was suffering under an increasingly heavy burden of defence expenditure. The Dominions were not sharing it, even though they were beginning to influence the conduct of British foreign policy. The situation would eventually break down. The

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1 Curtis to Amery, 29 Mar 1909, quoted in Walter Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men* (London, 1968), pp 134-6.

2 Milner to Oliver, 5 Nov 1907, Oliver Papers 86, fol 2; Curtis quoted from Oliver's book in the "Selborne Memorandum": B Williams, *op cit*, pp 87-8.

scheme outlined by Curtis to Amery was therefore approved: the creation in each Dominion of "a small group of carefully selected men"; a "central group" in London, "to collect, to digest, and to disseminate information"; "special organs" in each Dominion, along the lines of *The State*; and an itinerant agent to co-ordinate the campaign.

"[A]ll these activities would have for their primary object the preparation by the central agency in communication with the rest of a full and reasoned statement of the Imperial problem, setting out the alternatives involved, the real import of disruption, the sacrifices necessary to avoid it, and the successive stages through which the ultimate goal is to be sought . . . so compiled that each of the groups will be prepared to adopt and to issue it as its own manifesto."

The movement should be "tacit" until a common policy was agreed. "[F]or the present it would be inexpedient to seek or to allow identification with any party." An expenditure of £25,000 was to be anticipated, excluding the cost of producing magazines.<sup>1</sup>

The first Round Table meeting, described as such, took place at Plas Newydd in North Wales over the weekend of 4 - 5 September 1909. The party included four men, all peers, who were new to discussions of the project. They were Lords Anglesey, the host and one of Milner's "diehard" allies; Lovat, another ally and a prominent conscriptionist; Howick, heir to Earl Grey; and Wolmer, Selborne's heir. The printed conclusions arrived at earlier in the summer were rubber-stamped, and it was agreed to employ Curtis and Kerr at £1000 pa each, and to send them and Marris on a fact-finding tour of Canada straightaway. Significantly, however, the meeting

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1 [Marris,] "Memorandum of Conversations which took place between a few English and South African friends at intervals during the summer of 1909", Curtis Papers 156, item 1.

placed more emphasis on the need of formulating "subsidiary objects", and it was agreed that "for the present, and until the situation was ripe for some constitutional measure every effort should be made to extend the principle of co-operation".

Curtis, Kerr and Marris set sail for Canada on 17 September 1909. Before they did so, Amery had passed on a letter from Keith Feiling, an All Souls colleague now teaching at Toronto, in which a degree of circumspection was commended. "The average Canadian thinks of Canada first, the old country next, and the Empire third", Feiling wrote; "new" imperialism was virtually non-existent, and consequently "the dangers of any step leading to organic union are very great".<sup>2</sup> Kerr's notes show that the emissaries found attitudes towards the Empire which could not have been more striking as proof of Feiling's warnings. Not only the likes of Bourassa or Dufour, but even G M Wrong, E J Kyle and A J Glazebrook thought Imperial Union for the moment impracticable: imperial federation was "a long way off", the "present system works all right", the Empire "must become looser before it really cohered", federalism was "academic", "any statement of [the] problem as a whole would have [a] bad effect".<sup>3</sup>

Curtis's experience merely confirmed his beliefs. Reporting back for his colleagues, Curtis catalogued the dismal failure of Canadians to understand the "new imperialism": their inadequate perception of international rivalries, their lack of "proper recognition of native problems", their ignorance of the way Imperial Union could extend

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1 Minutes of RT Meeting, Plas Newydd, 4-6 Sept 1909, Lothian Papers 11, fols 1-6.

2 Feiling to Amery, 25 June 1909, Lothian Papers 11, fols 24-26.

3 [Notes from tour of Canada,] Lothian Papers 5, fols 1-104.

Canada's voice. Curtis urged haste: with the lapse of time, the difficulties of bringing Canada into closer union "will increase".<sup>1</sup>

Kerr's experience had the opposite effect: as he wrote to his father, it led him "to modify some of my views about the Empire" and to doubt the viability of the "Plas Newydd plans".<sup>2</sup> In his report, Kerr also stressed the paucity of "new imperialism" and the obstacles in its way. But he emphasised that "the tide of opinion" flowed in favour of Empire and that Canadians "will probably put their necks many an inch further into the noose of Imperialism without realising it". There was a real danger that premature action would make Canadians "frightened".<sup>3</sup> Kerr argued against the publication of any memorandum. At most, there might be a need for a "statement of broad ends and policy"; but the primary aim was rather one of "establishing loosely correlated centres of constructive imperialism, each pursuing a course suited to the peculiar needs of its own Dominion".<sup>4</sup>

Kerr's disagreement with Curtis was not over the eventual need for imperial federation, nor yet over its form; rather, it was over the question of timing. Whereas Curtis was all for immediate action and forcing the issue, Kerr believed that "we have lots of time in front of

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1 [Curtis,] "Confidential" [Memorandum on Canada, 1910], Lothian Papers 11, fols 59-78.

2 Kerr to Lord Ralph Kerr, 1 Nov 1909, Lothian Papers 459, fol 9.

3 [Kerr,] "The Situation in Canada", [1910,] Lothian Papers 14, fols 351-74.

4 [Kerr,] "The Question of Policy", [1910,] Lothian Papers 14, fols 272-88.



us".<sup>1</sup> As he wrote to his uncle at the end of 1910, he expected a choice to be made "in the next half century or less"; but "I don't believe that anything we in England can do in the next year or so will do much benefit".<sup>2</sup>

A meeting of the available members of the "Kindergarten" in January 1910 upheld Curtis's view on the importance of the memorandum. It was also, for the first time, specific about the aim of the movement: "an Imperial government constitutionally responsible to all the electors of the Empire", with control of defence, foreign policy and the dependencies. However, the Moot placed greater emphasis than before on "the encouragement of intermediate steps" and "the education of public opinion". Moreover, Curtis's idea of a network of journals was dropped, in favour of a single magazine to be edited in London.<sup>3</sup> A meeting a week later, at which the "Kindergarten" members were joined by Milner, Oliver, Lovat and Amery, signified a further retreat from Curtis's original plans. The previous meeting's definition of the principles of organic union was approved, but "it was also agreed . . . that nobody was committed to the acceptance of all of them".<sup>4</sup>

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1 Kerr to Curtis, 10 Aug 1910, Lothian Papers 2, fol 91.

2 Kerr to Duke of Norfolk, 22 Dec 1910, Lothian Papers 2, fols 157-64.

3 Minutes of RT meeting, Ledbury, 15-18 Jan 1910, Lothian Papers 11, fols 7-11.

4 Minutes of RT meeting, London, 23 Jan 1910, Lothian Papers 11, fols 12-13.

### Aims and Means

"Closer union" was a vague term, used at the time to describe any proposal which aimed at increasing the internal cohesion of the Empire, whether in the field of education, culture, economics or politics, and, if in the latter, whether supra-parliamentary, extra-parliamentary or inter-governmental. For the "Kindergarten", however, with their South African experience, "closer union of the Empire" had a more specific meaning: the creation of a new body, with powers over the whole Empire, a real Imperial Parliament, and with it "a single defence force animated by a single defence policy and controlled by a single executive".<sup>1</sup>

The reasons why the Round Tablers sought a constitutional reconstruction of the Empire are perhaps obvious. First and foremost was what might be called the Seeley thesis: in Selborne's words, the belief "that, if this country is to maintain herself in the years to come in the same rank with the US, Russia and Germany, the unit must be enlarged from the UK to the Empire".<sup>2</sup> A second reason was to strengthen the resources at the command of British rule in India and the dependencies. These were, as Curtis put it, "volcances upon which Great Britain is obliged to sit".<sup>3</sup> Finally, a number of the Moot (Milner and Oliver in particular) saw in Imperial union the means to insulate the Empire's against the violent swings which they associated with Britain's party politics. Kerr

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1 [Craik and Hichens,] "Draft letter to Steel-Maitland", [June 1912,] RT Papers, c 777 fols 85-8.

2 Selborne to E Prettyman, 19 Sept 1903, Selborne Papers 73, fols 5-6.

3 [Curtis,] *Memoranda on Canada and the British Commonwealth* (privately printed, Letchworth, 1910), p 26.

apparently shared this view, writing in 1910 that "a body whose business is to control foreign relations, the army and navy, and frame a policy for the Dependencies, must not be liable to be overborne by gusts of popular opinion".<sup>1</sup>

The Round Table differed from other imperialist pressure groups such as the Primrose League and the Overseas Club, and from the ill-fated Imperial Federation League, in thus having a reasonably clear idea of the aims it existed to pursue. It also differed in having, in the strategy outlined by Curtis, a fairly coherent idea of the means by which to achieve those aims.

Curtis's strategy was not without its critics in the early Moot. For Kerr, the main need was to disseminate the Imperialists' "belief in a common Anglo-Saxon civilisation and its influence on the world", and this, as he now realised, would take time, perhaps half a century.<sup>2</sup> Although Curtis never came round to such a long-term perspective, by 1913 he agreed that it would take "5 - 15 years of steady unsensational work" before the conditions were ripe for federation.<sup>3</sup>

The meetings which followed Curtis's and Kerr's visit to Canada brought nearer the surface other divergences and difficulties. It was not found possible to reach a formula for the proposed federation with which all members of the Moot could agree. "Federation", like "closer union",

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- 1 [Kerr,] "The Constitution of the Empire" (1910), Lothian Papers 14, fol 327.
  - 2 [Kerr,] "The Question of Policy", (1910,) Lothian Papers 14, fols 279-88.
  - 3 Curtis to Grigg, 17 Oct 1913, RT Papers c 807, fol 36.

was a vague term, and in some respects it was best kept that way. There were also problems defining the group's attitude to co-operation. As Amery wrote to Jebb in 1912, he for one was "convinced . . . that you cannot carry out federalism merely by letting the existing system break down"; federalism could only come about once there was "a practical federal spirit in the air, in other words men who have been accustomed to co-operate on quasi-federal lines".<sup>1</sup> Milner, Selborne, Brand and Kerr all expressed similar reservations before 1914.

Another bone of contention was Curtis's insistence that the Round Table should concentrate on moulding opinion in the Dominions rather than Britain. In a joint letter, Dawson, Duncan, Feetham and Perry argued that "for the present at any rate there is more need in London for vigorous organization and propaganda on the lines you indicate than in the colonies".<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Amery thought that

"the real difficulty when it comes to the pinch is not going to be the Dominions but this country, and this country has got to be familiarised with the idea that it must surrender its monopoly of power".<sup>3</sup>

Again, Curtis was initially resistant, as was Kerr, on the grounds that it was the Dominions who would be asked to make financial sacrifices.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, by 1913-14 the Moot had effectively agreed the necessity for domestic propaganda. The *Round Table* magazine was given out free in much

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1 Minutes of Moots, 15-18 Jan 1910 and 23 Jan 1910, Lothian Papers 11, fols 7-11 and 12-13; Amery to Jebb, 21 May 1912, Jebb Papers.

2 Duncan et al to Curtis, 23 Aug 1909, Lothian Papers 11, fols 42-45.

3 Amery to Kerr, 26 Jan 1911 (Amery file), RT (O) Papers.

4 Kerr to Amery, 27 Jan 1911, *ibid*.

larger quantities in Britain than in the Dominions; and a small start was made on "mass" opinion via the Workers' Educational Association.

Curtis's original plan was thus criticised in a number of respects by his colleagues, and in some was substantially modified. Moreover, the Moot reserved its opinion on a number of important issues. Nevertheless, in essentials, it was Curtis's scheme which was adopted in the course of the founding meetings of 1909-10.

Nimocks and Kendle have both emphasised the extent to which the Round Table was committed to an element of deception, by which on the one hand it portrayed itself as a disinterested network of "study-groups", and on the other it prepared the framework for an eventual federationist movement. There is some truth in this criticism. A degree of disingenuousness was thought necessary to allow "the gradual formation of right opinion".<sup>1</sup> The need for secretiveness was constantly reiterated and Hichens for one recorded his embarrassment when asked "'Do tell me what is Mr Curtis doing'" over the next few years.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Round Table's reticence also reflected the extent to which it was divided. As Oliver emphasised, the Moot was in no position to offer "pontifical recommendations" until it was itself agreed on the necessary reforms.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Minutes of RT meeting, 18 July 1912, RT Papers c 777, fols 133-4.

2 Hichens, "Provisional Proposals for the Organisation of the RT Office", May 1913, RT Papers c 778, fols 119-21; cf eg Minutes of RT Meeting, London, 4 Apr 1911, RT Papers c 776, fol 146; Kerr, "Memorandum", 24 Jan 1911, *ibid*, fols 38-41.

3 Oliver to G M Paterson, 21 June 1912, RT Papers c 777, fols 92-95.



The London group was dominated from the start by Unionists.

Nevertheless, the Round Table repeatedly professed itself to be a non-party, or even an all-party, grouping.<sup>1</sup> Again the discrepancy is glaring, but not entirely dishonest. In part the Moot's stance was an attempt to avoid the fate of the "tariff reform" campaign and to keep the door open to an all-party federationist movement<sup>2</sup>; in part, also, it was an expression of intent. The Moot did try to recruit Liberal members, although without much success.<sup>3</sup> But the largest element in the Round Table's stance appears to have been a hearty contempt for the rôle of parties and party politicians. Like Milner, Kerr condemned "the palaeological rigidity of party creeds". The ordinary run of politicians, whether Liberal or Unionist, were no more than "interpreters": "they never make a move until they are pretty certain that public opinion in the country, or at least in their party, is ripe for it".<sup>4</sup>

Some effort was made to interest leading politicians in the Moot's work, sometimes with surprising results. Maud Selborne organised a dinner for Sir Edward Grey, after which she was "most amused to find that [Grey] considers the proposal for an Imperial Parliament to be a new and original

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- 1 Eg [Kerr,] "Introductory", *RT*, Nov 1910, p 2; Curtis, *The Round Table Movement* (1913), p 23.
  - 2 [Marris,] "Memorandum of Conversations . . . during the Summer of 1909", Curtis Papers 156, item 1, p 7.
  - 3 Harold Baker (MP for Accrington) was invited to join, but attended only one meeting. The Moot considered various other "suitable Liberal recruits", but was not keen to attract Liberals merely as "window dressing": Grigg to Curtis, 1 Nov 1913, *RT Papers* c 807, fols 70-74.
  - 4 Kerr to Curtis, 10 Aug 1910, *Lothian Papers* 2, fols 84-91.

speculation of his own".<sup>1</sup> After another dinner for Winston Churchill, Lady Selborne thought that he "means to steal the Moot's clothes while they are bathing, and come out as the one true original Imperialist".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, in the Round Table view, party politics were secondary to the real political process. This was emphasised by Curtis, for instance, when he proposed to write to Austen Chamberlain in 1915: the latter, he believed, could be of great service, but as an influential voice in the business community, rather than as a politician.<sup>3</sup> Even Dominion politicians found themselves "a little out of it" when it came to their place in the Round Table scheme.<sup>4</sup>

The key to the Round Table strategy was "public opinion", of which the Round Tablers (like most who appealed to this court) had a rather limited view. "Personally I should say that the danger point in any great question depending on a popular decision is generally passed when one per cent of the voters have grasped the whole issues at stake", declared Curtis.<sup>5</sup> Obviously it depended very much on whom that "one per cent" comprised. Curtis and his associates were necessarily concerned that their movement should be composed of "persons of light and leading",<sup>6</sup> "the men of most weight and influence in each of the self-governing parts of the

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1 Lady Selborne to Curtis, 14 Jan [1913], Curtis Papers 2, fols 129-30.

2 Lady Selborne to Curtis, Sept [1913], Curtis Papers 2, fols 158-59.

3 Curtis to Grigg, 24 Apr 1915, RT Papers c 809, fols 25-26.

4 Ernest H Scott to Kerr, 28 Nov 1916, conveying Sir Joseph Ward's complaint, RT Papers c 850, fol 81.

5 Curtis, *Notes on the Progress of the Movement in Australia* (Bombay, 1916), p 5.

6 "Round Table Statement", 1913, Round Table Papers c 778, fol 197.

Empire" - businessmen, lawyers and academics who could claim to speak with some authority, and journalists who were in a position to mould, as well as to reflect, "opinion".

The Round Tablers' strategy was patently elitist, as Nimocks and Kendle have emphasised. On the other hand, the Round Table's "target" audience was not a handful of well-placed politicians (as has been generally assumed), but the "opinion-makers" who could force politicians to act. Even so, it is tempting to see the Round Tablers' limited conception of this audience as one reason for the movement's failure. Nevertheless, their conception appears to have been neither unusual nor clearly wrong. Gladstone's idea of an "upper ten thousand" still carried weight, even in an age of mass democracy. Indeed, one of the few scholarly attempts to come to grips with foreign policy making in modern Britain has concluded that the "informed public" - which "not only exerts a direct influence upon the government" but "largely conduct[ed] the public debate" - consists at most of "a few hundred active participants".<sup>2</sup>

### The "Original Moot"

The metropolitan Round Table was always small and (until the 1980s) exclusively male.<sup>3</sup> Membership was conferred by invitation, and no attempt

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- 1 Kerr to G Craig-Sellar, (July 1910,) Round Table Papers c 776, fols 22-4.
  - 2 V Wallace, *The Foreign Policy Process in Britain* (London, 1976), pp 88, 100.
  - 3 Maud Selborne and later Nancy Astor were invaluable as hostesses and links with other political figures, but neither was counted a member of the Moot. There were proposals for a separate "Ladies' Moot" in 1911, but no apparent action. In 1945 Macadam suggested (unsuccessfully) that his wife Caroline and Margaret Hodson should be invited to join.

was made to publicise the group's composition.

Not all of those who attended the 1909 meetings remained active. Anglesey and Jameson played no part in subsequent Round Table activities, and Wolmer and Howick were dropped discreetly by the end of 1911. Lovat's interest appears to have waned. Martin-Holland was active only in the finance committee. Steel-Maitland dropped out after his election to the Chairmanship of the Conservative Party in 1911; his application to rejoin the Moot was initially rejected<sup>1</sup>, although he again attended a number of Moots between 1915 and 1921.

Lord Milner was the fulcrum upon which the 1909 meetings had turned. He maintained an active interest in the group throughout its early years, and occupied a position of particular authority on contentious issues. He was a sort of "father-figure" to the younger Round Tablers and "the leader to whom, above everyone else, they looked".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Round Table was only one of a number of projects in which Milner had an interest. As Brand later recalled, "Milner was always in our confidence but . . . he left all the active work to [the younger Round Tablers] . . . and particularly to Curtis".<sup>3</sup>

Lord and Lady Selborne corresponded frequently with members of the Kindergarten, and showed great interest in their well-being and advancement. The Moot often benefited from Selborne's "horse-sense" at meetings, but Selborne's position as an active Unionist grandee again

1 Minutes of RT meeting, 20 Feb 1913, RT (O) Papers.

2 [Brand,] Lord Milner, *RT*, June 1925, p 427.

3 Brand to C Quigley, 18 Nov 1961, RT Papers c 867, fols 113-15.

precluded an especially vigorous rôle in the Round Table movement. He appears not to have commanded the same respect as Milner. Malcolm later recalled that Selborne was "rather given to the kind of pious platitude which appeals more to the mob than to a coterie of intellectual young men".<sup>1</sup>

More directly involved in the day-to-day affairs of the Moot was F S Oliver, a hard-nosed Scotsman whose success in business had given him the financial security to delve pungently into the politics of his age. As "Pacificus", Oliver was the author of a series of *Times* articles advocating a federal solution to the Irish problem. A fervent supporter of Tariff Reform and National Service, Oliver, like Milner, claimed to be above party politics; nevertheless, the younger Round Tablers were quick to discover that "he is really a thoroughly party man".<sup>2</sup>

Leo Amery might likewise have been described as "thoroughly party", ambitiously and pugnaciously so. Convinced of his own "high political genius",<sup>3</sup> Amery was temperamentally averse to compromise, a characteristic which endeared him neither to the Unionist hierarchy nor to his fellow Round Tablers. Nevertheless, Amery was a leading figure in British

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1 Malcolm, "Philip Kerr", [1946], (Lothian file,) RT (O) Papers. For Selborne's political activities in these years, see George Boyce (ed), *The Crisis of British Unionism: The Domestic Political Papers of the Second Earl of Selborne, 1885-1922* (London, 1987).

2 Brand to Kerr, 23 July 1912, Brand Papers, box 182.

3 Oliver to Dawson 7 Nov 1931, Oliver Papers 85, fols 243-4. By then Oliver himself was convinced that Amery was "nothing but a highly intellectual chatterbox, of bad judgement and quite extraordinarily unimpressive to common men".



Conservatism for almost half a century, and was a useful contact for other Round Tablers even after he had left the Moot.

Curtis and Kerr, the two original employees of the Round Table, were the Castor and Pollux of the movement, its spokesmen, ideologues and evangelisers. The relationship between the two was always close and mutually enriching - as Curtis declared, "I am only one blade in the scissors, and cut nothing unless I am hinged with you" - but it was often also uncomfortable. Curtis tended to patronise the younger Kerr; Kerr for his part thought that Curtis had "a complex".<sup>2</sup>

Kerr was not the only person to see in Curtis some such defect. Arnold Toynbee characterised Curtis as a "monomaniac", absolutely convinced by his own sense of mission, and incapable of seeing either the wider context or the possibility that he might be wrong.<sup>3</sup> More charitably, Austen Chamberlain observed that Curtis was filled "with a delightful dogmatism and perhaps sometimes has not seen as far into a problem as he thinks".<sup>4</sup> The "Kindergarten" nicknamed Curtis "the prophet", a soubriquet he found most congenial.

Curtis's self-assurance was all the more remarkable in that - unlike most of his colleagues - he had been an academic failure. In conversation deceptively self-effacing, Curtis was austere, abrasive and almost entirely devoid of humour. Even his most fervent admirers were forced to admit that

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1 Curtis to Kerr, 23 May 1927, Lothian Papers 227, fols 132-4.

2 Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 16 Sept 1914, Lothian Papers 464, fol 43.

3 Arnold J Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (Oxford, 1967), pp 130 ff.

4 Austen Chamberlain to Kerr, 24 Apr 1917, Lothian Papers 34, fol 13.

he was a "lover of mankind, not individual men".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, especially in the early years, Curtis exercised a remarkable hold over his Round Table colleagues, and also over a wider circle. Lord Salter later recalled that "neither I nor others . . . often succeeded" in "resisting what Lionel Curtis wished [us] to do".<sup>2</sup> Harry Hodson has described his tactics.

"First, the object - I almost wrote "victim" - was flattered with the insistence that he was uniquely able and fitted for the task; the whole enterprise, if not the future of the civilized world, turned upon him. Then the hypothetical consent became the assumed actual . . . . Finally the required conduct would be indicated with as much assurance that it would be followed as a doctor assumes when he writes a prescription."<sup>3</sup>

A larger than life character, Curtis had enormous energy, willpower and persistence. He tended to see everything and everyone in black and white. Similarly, other people tended to react violently either for or against him and his message. His personality was thus both an immense asset and an undoubted liability for the Round Table movement.<sup>4</sup>

Kerr's was a very different personality. By all accounts handsome, charming, even debonair, he was also intellectually gifted and capable of grasping subtleties and complexities which eluded Curtis. He had none of the latter's abrasiveness, although he did share Curtis's tendency to appear excessively self-assured. According to Thomas Jones, he

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1 G M Gathorne-Hardy, *Lionel Curtis, CH, 1872-1955* (London, 1955), p 5.

2 Salter, *Nemoirs of a Public Servant* (London, 1961), p 239.

3 Hodson, "Foreword" to Curtis, *World War: Its Cause and Cure* (London, 1992 edn), p v.

4 A rather hagiographic life of Curtis was written for a Harvard honors thesis by his godson J W Shepardson in 1949; a fuller and more balanced account is looked forward to from Deborah Lavin.

conveyed "a fallacious lucidity of one who had done the thinking and solved the difficulties for you".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the feature of Kerr's character which struck most friends and observers was a fundamental weakness for caprice and malleability. As Hodson recalled, he was "very impressionable".<sup>2</sup>

Kerr originally envisaged a political career after his return from South Africa.<sup>3</sup> In this he was encouraged by Oliver, who thought that in Parliament "you would be even more useful to our movement".<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, when a safe Unionist seat was offered him in April 1910, Kerr was persuaded by Curtis and others to turn it down in favour of the *Round Table* editorship.<sup>5</sup> Kerr saw the first four issues of the magazine off the press before embarking, in October 1911, on a year-long world tour. By the end of this he was suffering from profound physical and nervous exhaustion, which took the best part of the next two years to recover from. Although Kerr's attendance at pre-war meetings was therefore erratic, his was an

- 1 Thomas Jones, *A Diary With Letters, 1931-50* (Oxford, 1954), pp 514-15. Sir Robert Vansittart described Kerr/Lothian as "an incurably superficial Johnny-know-all": W N Medlicott, *Britain and Germany: the Search for Agreement, 1930-37* (London, 1969), p 12.
- 2 Hodson to Nevill Butler, 27 Nov 1947 (Lothian file), RT (O) Papers. Cf [Brand,] "Philip Kerr: Some Personal Memories", *RT*, June 1960, pp 234-43.
- 3 See, eg, Kerr to Lord Ralph Kerr, 4 Apr 1909, asking him to see Balfour "and remind him of Uncle Schomberg (the 10th Marquess of Lothian), and the family connections": Lothian Papers 458, fol 18.
- 4 Oliver to Kerr, 16 Aug 1909, Lothian Papers 11, fols 38-40.
- 5 Lord Ralph Kerr to Kerr, 7 and 10 April 1910, Lothian Papers 460, fols 1-4. Kerr's attempts to have the offer of the seat passed on to Craik were unsuccessful.

important influence in shaping the Round Table, and his openness to new ideas profoundly affected the subsequent direction of the movement.<sup>1</sup>

The careers of the other ex-members of the "Kindergarten" confirmed R S Rait's view that service with Milner in South Africa would prove a useful "apprenticeship" in public affairs.

As Chairman of Cammell Laird from August 1910 (appointed on Selborne's recommendation) Lionel Hitchens presided over one of Britain's major shipbuilding, steel and armaments conglomerates, and was an important figure in the contemporary debate on industrial relations, until his death in 1940. He served on numerous government committees and Royal Commissions between the wars. His rôle in the Moot was likened to "a steel rod of exquisite temper, revolving firmly and quietly, as an axle fulfilling its purpose should".<sup>2</sup> A close friend of Curtis's, Hitchens was often called upon to mediate between "the prophet" and the rest of the Moot.

Robert Brand joined Lazard Bros in 1909; he was its managing director until 1944, and a director until 1960. A key figure in the City of London, Brand also served on numerous government committees and was a frequent delegate at international conferences. Brand possessed a keen analytical mind. He was a "practical" man, and an enemy of "all sorts of metaphysics, bad or good".<sup>3</sup> He was undoubtedly Curtis's most persistent and effective

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1 J R M Butler's biography of *Lord Lothian* (London, 1960) has yet to be superseded, but the collection of essays edited by John Turner, *The Larger Idea* (London, 1988), provides useful amplification.

2 [Coupland,] "Lionel Hitchens", *RT*, Dec 1940, p 14.

3 John Buchan, "Ordeal by Marriage" (13 page poem, privately printed, 1915), *Lothian Papers* 16, fols 483-91.

critic within the Moot, and relations between them were sometimes strained.

On Milner's recommendation, Dougal Malcolm was appointed a director of the British South Africa Co in 1912. (He became President of the Company in 1937). According to Lord Malvern, he "played a very great part" in the subsequent development of the two Rhodesias.<sup>1</sup> After his death, Brand recalled Malcolm's gregariousness, wit and "profoundly Christian character".<sup>2</sup> Intellectually, he appears to have been solid rather than acute. Fundamentally conservative, especially on matters relating to the dependent Empire, Malcolm was nevertheless one of Curtis's closest allies on federation.

Milner's influence was again crucial in Geoffrey Dawson's appointment as editor of *The Times*, a position he held (with the brief exception of the years 1919-23) from 1912 until 1941. As such he was "one of the half-dozen most influential men in Britain", in A L Rowse's view.<sup>3</sup> Dawson's reputation (like Lothian's) has suffered enormously from his association with the policy of "appeasement"; at the time, however, he was widely respected as a model of conservative journalism, even (as during the abdication crisis) the keeper of the nation's conscience. His insider's information on high politics and his contacts around the globe were undoubtedly of enormous benefit to the Round Table. In turn, Dawson appreciated the opportunities for discussion provided by the Moot.

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1 [Brand,] "Dougal Orme Malcolm", *RT*, Dec 1955, p 5.

2 "B" [Brand], *The Times*, 2 Sept 1955.

3 A L Rowse, *All Souls and Appeasement* (London, 1961), p 2.



Nevertheless, his direct contribution to the Round Table was often limited by the demands of his job. After his retirement he attended Moots more frequently "to make amends . . . for years in which I have done nothing whatever to help".<sup>1</sup>

George Craik was Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police from 1910 to 1914. After war service with the Lovat Scouts, he was appointed Managing Director of the Commonwealth Trust. Before 1914 he was an active member of the Moot, especially in the magazine committee. He appears to have been particularly close to Oliver, with whom he shared a deep conservatism and an interest in Irish affairs.

John Dove was the exception among the "Kindergarten": ill-health prevented him from leading an active public life until the last years of the war, when he joined the War Office Intelligence Department. A brief spell as travelling representative of the Commonwealth Trust was followed in 1920 by his appointment as editor of *The Round Table*, a position he held until his death in 1934. Of all the "Kindergarten" members, Dove's contribution is hardest to gauge. Deeply religious, modest to the point of obtuseness, "he came as near to real saintliness as is given to our frail humanity".<sup>2</sup> Dove often appears to have been overawed by his more energetic colleagues, particularly Curtis, and even as editor his personality seems to have left little mark on the *Round Table*.

Other "Kindergarten" associates were included in lists of Moot members, and most attended meetings whenever they were in England.<sup>3</sup>

1 Dawson to Curtis, 2 May 1941, RT Papers c 861, fol 11.

2 Malcolm to Grigg, 21 Apr 1934, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1004.

3 "The Moot", [1914,] (Moot file,) RT (O) Papers.

Duncan, Feetham and Wyndham were closely involved in the South African leg of the Round Table. Duncan pursued a successful career in politics, ending his life as Governor-General of South Africa. Feetham pursued an equally successful career in law. Between the wars he chaired commissions and inquiries in India, Ireland, Kenya and Shanghai. Wyndham returned to England in 1930, but appears not to have re-established his membership of the Koot. The architect Sir Herbert Baker was also listed as a Round Table member, but he attended meetings very irregularly. Perry moved to Canada (as representative for Lazard Bros) in 1912. He contributed a number of *Round Table* articles from there, and briefly re-joined the Koot in the early 1930s. Marris and Weston attended meetings more frequently, thanks to generous I.C.S. leave. Both were important influences on the Round Table's Indian policy.

By the end of 1910 the Koot was joined by Lord Robert Cecil, brother of Maud Selborne, and a free-trade High Tory whom the "Kindergarten" welcomed "to protect us from preferential propaganda".<sup>1</sup> Cecil was an active participant in several early sub-committees, but dropped out after taking office in 1915. A more assiduous contributor was recruited in mid-1912, in the person of Edward Grigg, a journalist who had worked on the Chamberlainite *Outlook* before joining *The Times*. From 1913 Grigg was employed as joint editor of the *Round Table* while continuing to provide regular articles for *The Times*. The arrangement was kept secret, in case the Round Table was compromised by association with "so powerful and (as Liberals think) so partizan an organ as 'The Times'".<sup>2</sup>

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1 Kerr to Curtis, 7 Oct 1910, Lothian Papers 2, fols 124-6.

2 Grigg to S A Atkinson, 30 May 1913, RT Papers c 797, fols 109-11.

Although not Liberals, the last two individuals to join the prewar Moot, Reginald Coupland and Alfred Zimmern, were recruited partly to broaden the range of opinions within the group. Coupland's studies of Greece had convinced him that the decline of Hellenic power had resulted from "the fact that for all their internal patriotism the city-states could never combine".<sup>1</sup> Clearly already influenced by the precepts of "new" imperialism, Coupland fell under Curtis's spell during the latter's year as Beit Lecturer in 1912-13. The Moot, which regarded the Lectureship with something akin to proprietorial interest, agreed in May 1913 to support Coupland's candidature for the post and to invite him to join the group.<sup>2</sup> Thenceforth Coupland was to devote all his energies to the study of the history and contemporary politics of the Empire. Coupland counted himself a disciple of Ruskin and the early William Morris, and was always to be found on the more "democratic" wing of the Round Table.<sup>3</sup>

Zimmern was Coupland's senior by five years, and had been his tutor at New College. He shared many of the semi-socialist ideas of the "new" liberals Graham Wallas, Gilbert Murray and others, and was a leading figure in the Workers' Educational Association. He was particularly keen to ensure that the working class should "realize that the questions within the

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1 Coupland to Gilbert Murray, 14 Sept 1912, Coupland Papers 1/2/1; cf. Coupland, "The Growth of the City-State" (chapter 2 of a projected history of Greece), Coupland Papers 1/2/2.

2 Minutes of RT meeting, 29 May 1913, RT Papers c 778, fol 127. Earlier, the Moot had "approved the proposal for offering the Beit Professorship (sic) at Oxford to Feetham", but the latter had refused it. (Minutes of meeting, 30 Dec 1912, c 777, fol 97.)

3 See eg Coupland's lectures "The Spirit of William Morris" (nd), Coupland Papers, 1/2/5, and "Citizenship in the British Commonwealth" (10 Oct 1917), Lothian Papers 16, fols 497-525.

purview of an Imperial Parliament, Defence and Foreign Policy, are its concern".<sup>1</sup> It was Zimmern's links with the VEA, and the Moot's desire that "the two movements should keep as closely in touch as possible", which led to his inclusion in the Round Table.<sup>2</sup>

It is hardly necessary to emphasise that all the original Round Tablers came from wealthy and privileged backgrounds. Nevertheless, they were firmly convinced "that there were better goals in life than the making of money".<sup>3</sup> They all attended public schools at a time when, as Grigg recalled, these inculcated not only a "code", "how a man should behave and what he should strive to be", but a "creed", a "sense of . . . obligation to public service" and "a strong sense of the mission of the race".<sup>4</sup>

The Round Tablers' sense of "mission" was given further impetus by the strong religious inclinations which many of them shared. Oliver, who (with Brand) was unusually sceptical, went so far as to suggest that the group reconstitute itself as "God's Truth Ltd", and join in the money-making to be enjoyed from religious persuasion.<sup>5</sup> The Round Tablers' Christian convictions sometimes clouded their judgment. Curtis's belief that "the distinctions . . . between religion and politics . . . are false"<sup>6</sup> engendered a moralistic and subjective mode of discourse in which

- 1 Zimmern to Grigg, (nd, received 10 Aug 1914), RT Papers c 786, fols 143-4.
- 2 [Grigg] to Zimmern, 14 Feb 1914, RT Papers c 817, fols 14-15.
- 3 "Arthur J Glazebrook", *RT*, March 1941, p 340.
- 4 Grigg, *The Faith of an Englishman* (London, 1936), pp 381-5.
- 5 Oliver to Dawson, 11 June 1923, Oliver Papers 84, fols 46-7.
- 6 Curtis, "Memorandum for Discussion at Blickling", 19 Sept 1932, Lothian Papers 268, fol 743.

great emphasis was placed on faith, revelation and good intentions. Kerr doubted whether other religions "are capable of giving to their adherents that energy, fidelity to the right, brotherhood, public spirit and devotion to duty and the rule of law" which would enable them to enjoy the same measure of freedom and self-government as Christians.<sup>1</sup>

Another important influence on the Round Tablers' political psychology was the experience of "public service" which many of them had acquired. Kerr contended that "the secret of the success of the *Round Table* has been that it has been edited by people who have had a long experience of public affairs".<sup>2</sup> Such experience, however, was, in the case of the "Kindergarten" as of Milner, that of the unelected official. The younger Round Tablers therefore tended to share Milner's view that "administration" was "government in the true sense of the word". Moreover, the Round Table sought constantly to elaborate an ideal "National" policy which might be implemented without, and which might survive, the vagaries of electoral politics. This lent a peculiarly authoritative tone to Round Table pronouncements.

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr, "World Problems of Today" in *Approaches to World Problems* (New Haven, 1924), p 93.

<sup>2</sup> Lothian to Curtis, 27 March 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fols 633-4.



### 3. THE ROUND TABLE "MOVEMENT"

The Round Table was founded, as Curtis emphasised in 1913, "with a view to action".<sup>1</sup> The strategy adopted in 1909-10 envisaged the creation of a "'cloque', or clique, or group, or whatever we may call it in each Dominion to shout 'harrooh' in a spontaneous manner when the egg is hatched", leading to an Empire-wide movement for imperial federation.<sup>2</sup> John Kendle has rightly concluded that this strategy betrayed a somewhat naïve assessment of opinion in the Dominions. Nevertheless, there were other points where this strategy was clearly optimistic, and where the plans of 1909-10 stood in danger of becoming unravelled. In particular, Curtis's assumption that the Moot itself could agree on a new "Selborne Memorandum" had yet to be proved. Moreover, as Curtis himself realised, much of the rationale behind the Round Table movement hinged on the existence of an unstable and menacing international situation. It was therefore possible that "tremendous and swiftly moving events" might "rush upon us like a thief in the night and precipitate a crisis which public opinion has not yet been prepared to face".<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Curtis, *The Round Table Movement: its Past and its Future* (privately printed, London, 1913), p 9.
  - 2 Kerr to Curtis, 31 Aug 1910, Lothian Papers 2, fols 92-95.
  - 3 Curtis, *The Round Table Movement* . . . (London, 1913), pp 30-31.

### Finance

Lord Lovat was later to recall that the Plas Newydd meeting was primarily concerned with fund-raising.<sup>1</sup> In this, he was perhaps correct. Lord Anglesey was persuaded to part with £1000 pa for three years. The shrewder Lovat arranged that the Round Table's London office perform all the work of his Mushroom Valley Company (a South African land settlement scheme) in return for £200 and another £200 in 1912. Oliver gave £105, Milner £100, and all the others present £25 each.<sup>2</sup>

Milner spent the following months pressing other wealthy friends to make donations. He succeeded in extracting £2000 from Lady Vantage, £500 each from Lord Elphinstone and Gerard Craig-Sellar, £300 from Lord Leconfield, and £100 each from Jameson and the Duke of Sutherland.<sup>3</sup> Fund-raising continued apace throughout the Round Table's early years, netting one-off payments of £1000 from the Duke of Westminster and "E.C.G.", and regular payments of £300 pa from Lord Cowdray, £250 pa each from the Marquess of Salisbury, Earl Grey, J F Mason MP and Sir S Scott, £200 pa from Hugh Morrison, and £100 pa each from Viscount Iveagh, Lord Leven and Melville, Ernest Debenham, V S Burns, F C Tiarks, G Ridpath and R M Kindersley. Milner, Oliver, Brand and Hichens - the wealthier members

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1 Sir Francis Lindley, *Lord Lovat: A Biography* (London, nd), p 14.

2 [List of subscribers,] RT Papers c 782, fols 8-9.

3 *Ibid*; "Subscriptions promised", RT Papers c 778, fol 134.

of the Moot - also continued to support the Round Table on a regular basis.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these sources, the Round Table received £1400 residue from "Lord Selborne's fund", and £4300 promised by Sir Abe Bailey for *The State*, but not needed at the time.<sup>2</sup> Once some unspecified "ruffled feelings" were soothed, Bailey gave a further £2000 for Round Table publications and £1500 for the general account.<sup>3</sup> He was thereafter the most generous individual supporter of the Round Table, and of other projects associated with the group.

By far the most lucrative source of funds for the Round Table in its early years was the Rhodes Trust, which Milner persuaded to match private donations on a "£ for £" basis until the end of 1915, when the combination of war, falling de Beers values, and a series of unwise investments forced the Trustees to cut back on their discretionary expenditure. Under the "£ for £" arrangement, the Round Table received £18,993 of Rhodes Trust money by the end of the First World War.<sup>4</sup>

Without the receipt of such funds from individual supporters and the Rhodes Trust, it is unlikely that the Round Table would ever have been able to get off the ground, as the table on the following page shows.

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1 [Lists of subscribers,] RT Papers, c 782, fols 19, 37, 46, 63 and 208.

2 Milner to Kerr, 16 Sept 1909, Lothian Papers 11, fol 33.

3 Ibid; "Funds available as at 22 May 1913", RT Papers c 778, fol 153; Minutes of RT meeting, 12 Feb 1914, c 782, fol 139.

4 "Current State of Income", 9 Jan 1915, RT Papers c 783 fol 14; "Income and Expenditure, 1913-19", 25 March 1920, c 783, fol 109. The Round Table in fact received "£ for £" donations for the years 1909-14 and 1916 (having received larger amounts of private donations in the latter year than in 1915).

Income and Expenditure, 1910-19<sup>1</sup>

	Donations	Rhodes Trust	Other income	Expenditure
1909-10	5210	4255	159	4439
1911	225	2000	1416	4283
1912	3715	2000	1731	6322
1913	4580	1206	2415	7018
1914	2501	4580	2279	7508
1915	2183	2190	3676	7243
1916	2762		4360	7849
1917	2138		4475	7992
1918	713	2762	4532	8269
1919	426		4447	8129

(Other income = magazine, pamphlet and book sales, interest on investments)

Expenditure = magazine and other printing, organiser's and editors' salaries and expenses, London and Ledbury office expenses)

The Round Table's expenditure was always greater than its income from sources other than donations. Such was the initial scale of these donations that the group managed to avoid financial difficulties, although during the First World War it was forced to eat into the capital reserves accumulated in the previous few years. Thereafter, financial constraints became an important factor in determining the group's strategy.

1 "Finance", 3 Dec 1911, RT Papers, c 782, fols 3-6; "The Round Table [Magazine accounts]", c 782, fol 24; [1912 accounts,] c 778 fols 106-11; "Current State of Income", 9 Jan 1915, c 783 fol 14; "Income and Expenditure, 1913-19", 25 March 1920, c 783, fol 109.

The Round Table provided a livelihood for Curtis, except for a brief period when he was employed by the Colonial Office, until 1931, when he came into a substantial inheritance.<sup>1</sup> The Round Table also paid what at the time was a considerable salary of £1000 pa (rising to £1500 pa after the war) to Kerr and his successors as editor of the *Round Table*. Further sums had to be found for the Round Table offices. A suite of seven rooms at 175 Piccadilly was rented from early 1910, and by 1913 six employees worked there for salaries ranging from £500 pa (for the senior secretary Mr Handcock) to £71.10.0 pa (for the office hand Mr Preece). In addition, Curtis had his own office and secretary (from 1916 Pat Scott, whom he married in 1920) at his home in Ledbury, Herefordshire.<sup>2</sup> Despite a relatively high subscription rate (10s pa until 1920, £1 pa until 1948) the *Round Table* magazine only briefly broke even, in the late 1920s and again during the Second World War. Curtis's various studies were also continually in the red, and therefore subsidised.<sup>3</sup> None of the funds generated by Milner and his colleagues in London found their way to the Dominion groups, which were expected to be entirely self-financing.

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- 1 Curtis to Hitchens et al, 6 Aug 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fol 32; the Round Table continued to pay Curtis's office expenses after 1931.
  - 2 [Office expenses,] RT Papers c 782.
  - 3 Curtis's *Round Table Studies* were paid for by Dominion groups at cost price. Even so, a loss of £1658 was made between 1910 and 1914 (RT Papers c 782, fol 141), and a further loss of £699 in 1915 and 1916 (RT Papers, c 783, fol 103).



### The Round Table in the Dominions

It was crucial to Curtis's plan that the demand for federation should be launched from the Dominions; otherwise "such a movement would almost inevitably be interpreted as . . . an attempt to interfere with colonial autonomy".<sup>1</sup> He and his colleagues therefore went to great lengths to portray the Round Table as a real "co-operative" enterprise.<sup>2</sup> The South African origins of the movement were emphasised, and Curtis himself was encouraged to assume "the guise of a colonialisèd Britisher".<sup>3</sup>

Curtis's first port of call in 1910-11 was South Africa itself, where he set to work on his argument for imperial federation. The latter he finished by the end of May, and sent back to England to have printed under the title *Memoranda on Canada and the British Commonwealth* (referred to as the "Green Memorandum" or the "original egg").<sup>4</sup>

In South Africa, Round Table affairs were left in the hands of the remaining "Kindergarten" members Wyndham, Duncan and Feetham. These three enlisted the help of J Tyndall, a Johannesburg lawyer and associate of Feetham, to handle subscriptions, and at some later stage Howard Pim, Percy Horsfall and Professors F Clarke and E A Walker joined them in a "mootlet" to arrange *Round Table* articles. There was never any attempt to organise

- 1 Curtis to Kerr, 21 July 1910, Lothian Papers 1, fol 60.
- 2 RT, Nov 1910, frontispiece, and all subsequent issues to 1937.
- 3 Kerr to Curtis, 22 Dec 1910, Lothian Papers 12, fols 162-9.
- 4 Copies in Curtis Papers 156, items 4 and 6.

regular "study-groups". This was more than just the result of Curtis's missed opportunity: as the editor of the *Round Table* wrote in 1917, "it would make it difficult for our people in South Africa" - all of whom were politically ambitious - "if they were known out there to be the regular 'Round Table' contributors".<sup>1</sup>

In New Zealand, by contrast, Curtis set about forming Round Table "study-groups" with vigour and determination. He took great care not to offend Dominion sensibilities by appearing as the emissary of a London-based propagandist organisation.

"I come here as a man identified with South Africa, I tell them how the South African group grew up in the last ten years . . . . I go on to . . . suggest . . . that they should form little groups of students, similar to our South African group, and that we should pursue these studies together, with a view to the development of a policy of mutual relations which would fit the circumstances of all. I represent the establishment of a similar group in England, rather as the outcome of suggestion from South Africa, subsequently endorsed by the approval of friends we have made in Canada."<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's version of the Round Table's origins was undoubtedly helpful to him in his task of recruiting Dominion contacts, who in turn lent credibility to the Round Table's projected image; but it also left him and his colleagues open to the charge of insincerity, and presaged difficulties should their views not meet with full agreement.

Curtis spent three months in New Zealand, forming groups in Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland, Wanganui and Dunedin, as well as a

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1 Coupland to Oliver, 8 Sept 1917, Oliver Papers 90, fol 92.

2 Curtis to Kerr, 21 July 1910, Lothian Papers 1, fols 59-83.

network of *Round Table* agents. Altogether some 44 individuals were involved, including 11 academics, one MP and roughly equal proportions of lawyers, businessmen and landowners.<sup>1</sup> Curtis's principal contact was S Arnold Atkinson. His brother, A R Atkinson, was New Zealand correspondent of the *Morning Post* until 1911 and of *The Times* thereafter. Curtis was extremely pleased with his work, writing to Oliver that the Wellington group had had to be restrained in their enthusiasm for publishing his "original egg".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis next sailed for Australia, where - with the help of John Dove, sent to speed up Curtis's work - groups were established at Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. The composition of these groups again reflected Curtis's concern to capture the "leading men" of the Dominion. Of some 63 individuals initially enlisted, 20 were or went on to become academics; 9 were public servants; 5 were churchmen, including an archbishop and two bishops; and the remainder were in almost equal measure lawyers, businessmen and landowners.<sup>3</sup> A Round Table office was set up at Sydney, but Curtis's principal contacts were in Melbourne, where F W Eggleston and Professor W Harrison Moore were among the founder members of the longest-surviving Round Table branch.

- 1 Lists of New Zealand RT group members. RT Papers c 844, fols 2-6, 14-18 and 23-24; cf J Kandle, "The Round Table Movement: Lionel Curtis and the Formation of the New Zealand Groups in 1910", *NZ J of History*, vol 1, no 1 (April 1967), pp 33-50.
- 2 Curtis to Oliver, 15/16 Aug 1910, Lothian Papers 2, fols 135-51.
- 3 Lists of Australian Group Members, RT Papers, c 844, fols 2-6, 14-18 and 19-20; cf L Foster, *High Hopes* (Melbourne, 1986).

Canada, the oldest and most populous of the Dominions, was the crux of Curtis's scheme: as he emphasised to the Wellington group,

"the one country which it is important to influence was [sic] Canada, and . . . our main objective should be to get a lot of men like themselves in Canada to adopt a statement of this kind in some shape or form and to issue it to Canadians on their own responsibility".

However, Curtis recognised that Canada was "the one Dominion to which I cannot show the Egg in its present form". He therefore requested the Moot to allow him to return home "until I have got a doctrine I can preach".<sup>1</sup> He felt that his task was made all the more difficult by the Moot's decision to authorise the journalist (Sir) John Willison and the financiers Sir Edmund Walker, A J Glazebrook and (Sir) Edward Peacock to control the Canadian end of the *Round Table* magazine. By so doing the Moot was

"now putting the formation of the group into the hands of men who are, I admit, second to none that we met in Canada. The difficulty is that they differ with us on the point which . . . we came to the conclusion was fundamental . . . . Now if we succeed in getting this organisation to agree to the main features of our policy, well and good; but if not, we shall be put in the position of a definite rupture with some of our best friends, and we shall then have to set to work to create a separate organization".<sup>2</sup>

The Moot was unsympathetic to Curtis's reasoning, and ordered him to return via Canada, as planned.<sup>3</sup> Curtis spent only two months in Canada, and set up only two Round Table groups, at Toronto and Montreal. Some 37 individuals were initially enlisted, including 12 academics and 2 churchmen. Financiers (6) were more prominent than in Australasia,

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1 Curtis to Oliver, 15/16 Aug 1910, Lothian Papers, 2, fols 135-51.

2 [Curtis,] "Memorandum", 18 May 1910, RT Papers c 776, fols 64-72.

3 Kerr to Curtis, 14 Oct 1910, Lothian Papers 2, fols 127-34.

lawyers (3) less. Businessmen constituted the bulk of the remainder.<sup>1</sup> A J Glazebrook and E J Kylie were made convener and secretary of the Toronto group, which paid for an office. After Curtis's departure the Canadian groups expanded rapidly. By 1912 there were 102 members of the Toronto group, and there were new groups in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg and Halifax. A separate Newfoundland group was set up in 1912, with (Sir) Brian Dunfield as secretary.<sup>2</sup>

Curtis later claimed that the Round Table groups comprised a representative cross-section of opinion in the Dominions, including "men . . . found among the ranks of socialism, radicalism and labour".<sup>3</sup> This was undoubtedly misleading. Of 37 original Canadian Round Tablers, only 2 were Francophones (Talbot Papineau and Senator R Dandurand), and 3 others were regarded as liberals (Vincent Massey, W H Blake and J S Willison). The 63 original Australian Round Tablers did include the Labour elder statesman J C Watson and a Trade Union official, William Somerville, as well as a few others sympathetic to Labour, but they were clearly in a small minority. In New Zealand, only one of the 44 original Round Tablers, Edward Tregear, had strong Labour connections. One reason why the Round Table failed to attract a more representative membership may be inferred from a later episode involving a Labourite in New Zealand: his attendance at a Round

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- 1 Lists of Canadian RT Group Members, RT Papers c 844, fols 2-6 and 14-18.
  - 2 List of Toronto members, 31 Oct 1912, (Kylie file,), RT (O) Papers. Similar lists for other Canadian groups appear not to have survived. For Newfoundland, see Dunfield, "Notes on the RT Group", 16 Dec 1921, (Newfoundland file,) RT (O) Papers.
  - 3 Curtis, *The Round Table Movement* (1913), p 23.



Table meeting caused a flurry of excitement, and a general agreement that it "would have done [him] . . . a lot of good".<sup>1</sup>

As Leonie Foster has demonstrated in the case of Australia, the Round Table groups comprised a very unrepresentative section of Dominion populations. They were, as they were intended to be, composed of members of the social, cultural and political élites of the new nations.<sup>2</sup> Many Dominion Round Tablers - such as (Sir) Robert Garran, (Sir) John Latham and F V Eggleston in Australia, or Vincent Massey and Loring Christie in Canada - went on to play important rôles in policy-making in their own countries. At the time of the Versailles conference, Curtis remarked on the number of Round Tablers included in Dominion delegations. This was, he thought, "simply due to the fact that for ten years . . . the group system had given the R.T. men a special training".<sup>3</sup> Whether or not this was so, it is clear that the Round Table was able to attract individuals of a very high calibre in each of the Dominions.

The question which naturally arises is, what attracted such men to the Round Table? Some - such as H F von Haast in New Zealand, or Harrison Moore in Australia - appear to have joined out of old-fashioned imperial loyalism. Nevertheless, such individuals were surprisingly rare. Most appear to have joined because they saw in the Imperial connection the means to pursue their own agenda of national interests and nation-building. In Kerr's view, there was no contradiction in the Round Table consisting of

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1 H F van Haast to Grigg, 10 May 1920, Lothian Papers, 17, fol 1.

2 Foster, *High Hopes* (Melbourne, 1986), chapters 2 - 4.

3 Curtis to A J Glazebrook, 2 Sept 1921, RT Papers c 796, fols 134-40.

"good nationalist Englishmen, good nationalist Canadians, good nationalist Australians, etc".<sup>1</sup>

Both nationalists and imperialists agreed that there was an "Imperial problem". They agreed that some new system of Anglo-Dominion relations would have to be found if the Dominions were to become truly "self-governing". They agreed, also, that conservatism, inertia and ignorance of foreign affairs constituted the main obstacles to change. Eggleston complained that the average Australian's attitude towards defence and foreign policy was at best "somewhat like the man who will sign cheques for his wife's charities, but does not want to be worried by details of the cases".<sup>2</sup> The Round Table was a useful means of educating opinion in the Dominions. But it was clearly more. Very few Dominion Round Tablers thought that it was possible - let alone desirable - for their countries to survive as independent nations.<sup>3</sup> The question, therefore, was how to make British policy more responsive to the needs of the Dominions. And here the interests of Dominion nationalism and of imperial unionism converged. As Kerr emphasised, it was necessary for the Dominions to "barrack loudly" if they were ever "to have a say".<sup>4</sup>

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1 Kerr to V Massey, 4 Jan 1917, RT Papers c 822, fols 28-9.

2 Eggleston to Grigg, nd [1913], RT Papers c 798, fols 155-59.

3 E J Kylie, "Liberalism and Empire" [1910], (Kylie file,) RT (O) Papers; cf *Round Table Studies, [First Series, Vol 1, 1911]* pp 638-86.

4 Kerr to W H Kelly, 28 Nov 1911, RT Papers c 797, fols 27-30.

The Round Table Magazine

Curtis's original plan had envisaged a network of journals in each of the self-governing Dominions, edited locally, but also carrying a certain amount of common material fed by an editorial clearing-house in London. It is not clear whether Curtis intended these journals to be circulated at all beyond the membership of local Round Table groups.

This plan was substantially modified by the meetings of 1909-10. It was agreed that there should be only one journal, edited in London, "to which all [Round Table] workers and all important statesmen in the Dominions could be induced to subscribe".<sup>1</sup> In Curtis's absence, he and the Moot continued to work "in diametrically opposite directions".<sup>2</sup> The Moot agreed to start producing *The Round Table* even before Curtis had finished forming Dominion groups. Printed pamphlets and flysheets advertising the magazine made no mention of the Round Table groups. Moreover, these promised a regular, comprehensive, well-balanced survey of Imperial affairs: in other words, not a forum for discussion, but a medium of information and enlightenment.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the London group still saw the *Round Table* magazine as "an offshoot of the movement".<sup>4</sup> Kerr identified three main purposes for the new journal, all of them connected to the eventual goal of the Round Table movement:

- 1 Minutes of RT meeting, Ledbury, 15-18 Jan 1910, Lothian Papers 11, fols 7-11.
- 2 Curtis to Kerr, 21 July 1910, Lothian Papers 1, fols 59-83.
- 3 "The Round Table" (1910), RT Papers, c 844, fols 159-65; cf "The Round Table" (1910), *ibid.*, fols 25-6.
- 4 "Round Table Statement", 1913, RT Papers, c 778, fol 199.

- a) it would serve as a "link between the students of the Imperial problem within each group",
- b) it would "help to recruit believers in Imperial Union who are not known to the members of the groups", and
- c) it would correct "false impressions and misunderstandings", and disseminate "those facts, figures and ideas, which must become the commonplaces of public opinion, before it is ready to receive the true gospel".<sup>1</sup>

The first issue of *The Round Table* contained a number of references to the inadequacy of the existing constitutional machinery of the Empire. Subsequent issues carried articles on such topics as the confederacy of Delos and the union of England with Scotland, which would have made little sense except in the context of arguments about the respective merits of co-operation and federation.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Moot agreed "that until the 'egg' is published the *Round Table* should not come out flat-footed in favour of a scheme of organic union of the Empire".<sup>3</sup> Oliver's call for "a more definite and propagandist" and "positive line upon the need of Imperial Union" was decisively rejected.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Kerr, "Memorandum" [Nov/Dec 1910], Lothian Papers 11, fols 46-58.

2 [Kerr,] "Introductory", *RT*, Nov 1910, pp 3-4; [Perry,] "An Early Maritime Confederacy", *RT*, March 1912, pp 312-17; [W P Johnston,] "The Union of England and Scotland", *RT*, March 1913, pp 277-302.

3 Minutes of RT meeting, 21 Nov 1912, RT Papers, c 777, fols 168-9.

4 Oliver, "Minute", [June 1913,] RT Papers, c 778, fol 50; Minutes of RT meeting, 26 June 1913, RT (O) Papers.

Initially the Koot's attitude can be explained in terms of the "study-group" strategy. While it was believed that the *Round Table's* "influence mainly depends upon its leading articles being written from one point of view, i.e. in knowledge of and sympathy with the doctrines of the 'egg'"<sup>2</sup>, it was also believed that the call for Union would have to be carefully orchestrated. Increasingly, however, the Koot's attitude reflected conflicts over the timing, form and even need of Union, which Curtis's attempts to produce a new "Selborne Memorandum" brought out. As a result, the Koot came to appreciate the magazine as a distinct and separate mouthpiece, through which to influence opinion on a wide range of issues, sometimes unconnected to federation.

The Koot's collective responsibility for what was published in the *Round Table* was an important element in maintaining the consistency of the magazine. Ideally, "the line to be taken in the policy articles is thrashed out very earnestly, [and] the article is then drafted by the writer selected, circulated and thrashed out again".<sup>3</sup> As Amery later emphasised, the process "still left play for a good deal of individual outlook on the part of the various authors".<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, "the views

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- 1 Oliver, "Minute", [June 1913,] RT Papers, c 778, fol 50; Minutes of RT meeting, 26 June 1913, RT (O) Papers.
  - 2 [Kerr,] "Editorial Arrangements", [Jan 1912,] RT Papers, c 781, fols 162-3.
  - 3 Curtis to Sir Arthur Salter, 17 Apr 1930, Lothian Papers 251, fols 596-99.
  - 4 Amery to J Conway, 21 Feb 1952, (ed ctee file,) RT (O) Papers.



expressed" were generally "taken as being those of a body of men with a certain reputation".<sup>1</sup>

The anonymity of *Round Table* articles reflected the fact that they expressed the collective viewpoint of the Koot. It was also useful in concealing the extent to which *Round Table* articles (which, according to the printed circulars, would always be written by "qualified persons"<sup>2</sup>) were the work of a relatively small number of individuals.

Members of the London Koot wrote approximately two thirds of all identifiable "policy" articles in the years 1910-18.<sup>3</sup> Kerr, editor from 1910 to 1916, and Coupland, his successor from 1917 to 1919, were particularly prolific, as were Oliver, Brand, Craik and Grigg (who acted as caretakers of the magazine during Kerr's illness). Hichens, Malcolm and Zimmern also contributed a number of articles. Dawson appears to have contributed only on British politics between 1920 and 1922. Curtis wrote a number of articles after 1918, but none before. Coupland thought that Curtis would only produce "some particular thesis of his own" which would by no means be "practical politics".<sup>4</sup>

Others who contributed "policy" articles in the early years included the "Kindergarten" associates Duncan, Feetham, Perry, Marris and Meston. Roughly one-fifth of early "policy" articles were by members of the

1 Dove to Brand, 23 June 1933, Lothian Papers 276, fols 608-11.

2 "The Round Table", [1910,] RT Papers, c 844, fols 25-26.

3 See Appendix D, "Round Table Articles, by Author".

4 Coupland to Kerr, 17 Jan 1919, Lothian Papers 17, fol 480.

Dominion groups (including the "Kindergarten" members in South Africa). In some cases they were disavowed by the Moot.

An early circular for the *Round Table* stated that it was "not a commercial undertaking", but that "there is no reason why the journal should not be read by every man . . . who is seriously concerned with Imperial affairs".<sup>1</sup> By contemporary standards the circulation of the magazine was quite respectable.<sup>2</sup> A print-run of 3500 for the first issue gradually increased to 6500 by June 1914; 13,000 of the "Special War Issue" were printed in September. The print-run then settled down to around 10,000 for the remainder of the decade.<sup>3</sup> Most sales were through bookshops. The number of regular subscribers reached a plateau of just over 3,000 at the end of 1912. Relative to population, subscribers were more numerous in the Dominions (particularly New Zealand) than in the UK: at the end of 1914, for example, there were 935 subscribers in the UK, 614 in Canada, 360 in Australia, 227 in South Africa and 799 in New Zealand.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 [Untitled, printed circular for distribution in Canada, 1911.] RT Papers, c 844, fols 29-33.
  - 2 The weeklies *New Age*, *New Statesman* and *Nation* had circulations of about 3,000. Even the most successful weekly, *The Spectator*, had a circulation of only 22,000 in 1903, falling to 13,500 in 1922: K Robbins, *Politicians, Diplomacy and War in Modern British History* (London, 1994), ch 9. Circulation figures for the major quarterlies are likely to be similar or even smaller.
  - 3 "The *Round Table*", 10 May 1920, Brand Papers, Box 41; cf papers on the magazine's finance, RT Papers, c 782-3 and c 844-6.
  - 4 [Subscription lists.] RT Papers, c 844, fols 210 ff and c 846, fols 228 ff; "Round Table Number 16", 27 Oct 1914, RT Papers, c 782, fol 202.

To make sure that the magazine reached its intended audience, the Root sent out large numbers of each issue free: 668 in September 1912, and 1,222 by September 1914.<sup>1</sup> In Britain the recipients included Buckingham Palace, leading politicians, all national newspapers and high-class reviews, the leading provincial papers, shipping lines, hotels and London clubs.<sup>2</sup> Free and cost-price copies were also distributed through the VEA and the Overseas Club (whose secretary wanted "every member . . . to become imbued with the Round Table doctrines"<sup>3</sup>). Journalists were considered particularly important targets. As Curtis stated, "the *Round Table* is not intended so much for the average reader, as for those who write for the average reader".<sup>4</sup> In order to make the journalists' job easier, a subcommittee was established to write a précis of each issue, which was then sent to all leading British and Dominion newspapers.<sup>5</sup>

For the first few years of its existence, the *Round Table* was unique. Other quarterlies, such as the *Westminster*, *Edinburgh* and *National Reviews*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Blackwoods*, published occasional articles on Empire relations and foreign policy. The Royal Colonial Institute's *Proceedings* provided a wealth of information and analysis. Finally, *The Times* published occasional supplements on individual parts of the Empire as

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- 1 "The Round Table" [1912], RT Papers, c 844, fol 131; "Round Table Number 16", 27 Oct 1914, c 782, fol 202.
  - 2 [Free lists, 1910-14,] RT Papers, c 844-5; [UK lists,] c 845, fols 55-74; [Dominion lists, March 1912,] c 844, fols 123 ff.
  - 3 Evelyn Wrench to Kerr, 11 Dec 1914, RT Papers, c 845, fol 9.
  - 4 Curtis, *Dyarchy* (London, 1920), p 74.
  - 5 Minutes of RT meeting, 9 May 1912, RT Papers, c 777, fols 12-15.

well as news items from local correspondents. None of these, however, attempted to do what the *Round Table* set out to do, which was to provide a regular, comprehensive and consistent survey of the Imperial position, to balance information with argument, and to pursue an agenda of considerable controversiality with subtlety and discrimination.

#### The "Green Memorandum"

The *Round Table* magazine was an increasingly important focus of Round Table activities, both in London and in the Dominions. Nevertheless, the real purpose of the organisation was to campaign for "closer union" of the Empire. Central to the strategy adopted in 1909-10 was the preparation of a convincing case for federation. Indeed, the whole of Curtis's plans hinged on his ability to produce a document acceptable both to the Moot and to the Round Tablers in the Dominions.

The "Green Memorandum" was Curtis's first attempt at producing such a document. Although his later writings differed in both form and substance, many of the themes which he developed remained central to his critique.

Curtis prefaced his essay with an analysis of international relations reiterating the imperialist belief that nations necessarily engaged in a world-struggle for survival and predominance. Citing Captain Mahan, he argued that Britain's naval hegemony was a necessary condition for the evolution of Canada and even of the United States. He mocked Canadians' assumption that they were already self-governing: lacking control of defence and foreign policy, Canada could not claim to have "its own hand on its own rudder".<sup>1</sup> British institutions, meanwhile, were "breaking down

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<sup>1</sup> [Curtis,] *Memoranda on Canada and the British Commonwealth* (privately printed, Letchworth, 1910), p 74.

beneath the strain", resulting in the congestion of parliament, the retardation of social reform, even the physical and mental deterioration of the British race.<sup>1</sup>

If present relations were inadequate, so too would be any form of mere co-operation, which would leave unresolved the central issue of accountability: the Admiralty, War and Foreign Offices could not operate if responsible to "five or six" different governments. Moreover, co-operation would actually be dangerous, as it would "encourage the delusion that we are equipped with the strength which can only be derived from unity itself".<sup>2</sup>

Thus Curtis came to his "Alternative", the "organic union" of Britain and the Dominions. This, he admitted, was supported by "so few [Canadians] that they scarcely count".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, in the long term, union was the only alternative to dissolution. Curtis envisaged a peripatetic Government on parliamentary lines, with a lower house elected in proportion to population, and an upper house consisting of an equal number of members from each represented part. It would control defence, foreign policy and the dependencies, but not tariffs; it would derive its revenue in the first instance from the existing national governments.<sup>4</sup>

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1 *Ibid.*, pp 85-98. Curtis devoted many pages to the question of degeneration, quoting C F G Masterman's *The Heart of the Empire* extensively. Like Winston Churchill, he supported the segregation of the "feeble-minded".

2 *Ibid.*, p 127; cf pp 70-84.

3 *Ibid.*, p 58.

4 *Ibid.*, pp 99-128.



Curtis's "Green Memorandum", together with his addenda *The Australian People* and *New Zealand Notes*, were initially circulated to some 120 group members and other friends in Britain and the Dominions.<sup>1</sup> Their comments, written on the blank pages interleaved for the purpose, were returned to Curtis and issued as *Round Table Studies, First Series* in 1911 and 1914. These volumes did not identify by name the authors of remarks included, for the ostensible reason that "each student should feel the utmost freedom in expressing his views".<sup>2</sup> Curtis was in possession of a list identifying the authors (a fact concealed from the Dominion groups<sup>3</sup>), but no extant copy can now be found.

Many individuals doubted that Britain's burden would be any less if there were no Dominions to protect. Others suggested that as Britain derived greater benefit from overseas trade she should continue to bear a greater share of naval expenditure.<sup>4</sup> Most thought Curtis's picture of the weary Titan exaggerated. Degeneration was "stuff and nonsense", according to one critic.<sup>5</sup>

A number of commentators thought that the main obstacle to federation would come from Britain itself. One suggested that a long period of education was needed in order to "teach the English voters that they must

1 Small "study groups" (mainly consisting of university teachers and students) were subsequently set up at Oxford, Cambridge, Reading, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

2 Curtis, *Dyarchy* (London, 1920), p 43.

3 Curtis to Hitchens, Nov 1911, RT Papers, c 844, fols 77-84.

4 *Round Table Studies, [First Series, vol I, 1911,]* pp 33 (contribution 41) and 35 (contributions 43 and 63); pp 261 (contribution 4) and 263 (contribution 42).

5 *Ibid*, p 223 (contribution 55).

regard themselves as 'partners in the Empire'. Another doubted whether 'the Mother of Parliaments' [would] consent to play second fiddle'.<sup>1</sup> The Glasgow group feared that, if Curtis's scheme were implemented, "the whole character of the British constitution would be upset".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's hostility to "co-operation" was not shared by all his "students": many thought it a necessary stage of Imperial relations which would grow (rather than collapse) into Union.<sup>3</sup> Similar views were put forward more forcefully in private correspondence. Eggleston thought that unity might be "dis-served by Imperial Federation" if it were implemented too hastily. "It is clear to my mind that [unity] . . . will only be achieved in the last resort by some form of organic union"; nevertheless, federation should be seen as "the final step", not "a first step".<sup>4</sup>

As for Curtis's "Alternative", numerous contributors foresaw difficulties over the rôle of local defence forces, powers of taxation and (especially) control of the dependencies. Others argued that "organic union" would not be complete without control of tariffs and migration.<sup>5</sup>

1 *Ibid.* pp 245 (contribution 32) and 606 (contribution 1).

2 *Round Table Studies, First Series, Vol II* [1914], p 498.

3 *Round Table Studies, [First Series, vol I,] p 179* (contribution 61); pp 405-06 (contributions 80 and 81).

4 Eggleston to Grigg, 16 July and 14 October 1913, RT Papers c 798, fols 102-04 and 125-32.

5 *Round Table Studies, [First Series, vol I,] pp 250-351.* For the dependencies, see below, pp 88-89. For tariffs, see pp 127-31.

Curtis himself reckoned that he could identify 35 supporters of his scheme and 9 opponents from the Dominions other than South Africa, including 13 supporters as against 6 opponents in Canada.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, even those who supported Curtis's argument emphasised that they felt out of line with general opinion. As one otherwise enthusiastic student put it,

"I . . . do not wish it to be understood that I think that a scheme which is theoretically just and promises to be effective can at present be carried out in politics. Personally I think it most unlikely that Canada, for example, would agree to come under the control of a Federal Government . . . . In my judgment nothing but the pressure of grave and imminent danger from war would induce the Canadians even to consider such a proposal".<sup>2</sup>

The London group itself was far from ready to endorse Curtis's memorandum. Many members thought Curtis over-enthusiastic in his denunciation of co-operation, but, paradoxically, also contended that any scheme of federation would have to be more wide-ranging. Kerr believed that "many concessions [that] have been made to Dominion prejudices" might have to be abandoned.<sup>3</sup>

While Curtis was still touring the Empire, the Moot concentrated on the passages in which he alluded to imperial federation as a panacea for Britain's domestic problems. The majority soon decided that "it is inadvisable to base an argument for Imperial Union on a detailed examination of the domestic evils caused in the United Kingdom" by the existing constitutional practices.<sup>23</sup>

1 *Ibid.*, pp 794-5.

2 *Ibid.*, p 778 (contribution 100).

3 [Kerr,] "Memorandum", [Nov 1910], RT Papers, c 776, fols 124-36.

Rather more significant were disagreements over the form the proposed Imperial Government should take, its constitution, functions and powers. A subcommittee was set up in November 1910 consisting of Kerr, Brand and Cecil, to thrash out with Curtis an acceptable *Form of an Organic Union of the Empire*. In the course of discussions lasting four months, Curtis's original scheme was considerably modified. The proposal of a peripatetic assembly was dropped. The necessity of a right of direct taxation was insisted upon. Whatever its powers in peacetime, the Imperial Government "ought to have power to do anything" in time of war. Finally, rather than a two-tiered Parliament which gave the Dominions a safeguard against British preponderance, Curtis was made to accept a single assembly in which the majority of seats would represent the British Isles.<sup>2</sup> Even this outline did not satisfy all the members of the Moot: Amery and Selborne had both submitted memoranda calling for a unitary constitution, which would enable the Imperial Government to control tariffs.<sup>3</sup>

Curtis was thus caught between the Dominion groups, which were reluctant to accept the whole of his proposals, and the Moot, which thought them not far-reaching enough, and had now saddled him with a scheme for

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- 1 Kerr to Curtis, 30 Sept 1910, Lothian Papers 2, fols 96-123; Minutes of RT meeting, Blackmoor, 12-13 Nov 1910, RT Papers, c 776, fols 79-81.
  - 2 [Curtis,] *The Form of an Organic Union of the Empire* (privately printed, revised 23 March 1911), copy in Curtis Papers 157, item 11.
  - 3 Amery, "Memorandum", [Jan 1911], RT Papers c 776, fols 113-23; Selborne, "Memorandum", 26 Jan 1911, c 776, fols 89-91.

which, as he admitted, "public opinion today is nowhere ripe". Clearly a more persuasive argument would have to be found.

Curtis therefore embarked on a new three-part study of the problem. Historical analysis would reveal the necessity of the British Empire; analysis of contemporary conditions would illustrate the need for a decisive step to prevent its dissolution; finally, the irreducible components of such a step would be elaborated.

#### "The Principle of the Commonwealth"

The position of India and Britain's other dependencies under imperial union was a question which the Imperial Federation League had been unable to resolve.<sup>2</sup> Initially, the Round Table ignored this problem, assuming that the Dominions would be keen to share in the government of these vast territories. Curtis even proposed to let them do so before Union (by transferring the West Indies to Canadian administration, Fiji to Australian, and so on).<sup>3</sup>

In his "Green Memorandum" Curtis made several references to Britain's rôle as a "constable" in the dependencies, which, foreshadowing Lugard, he described as "her duty to them and her duty to the world at large". He emphasised the dependencies' "incapacity" to secure "civilised rule" for

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1 [Curtis,] *The Form of an Organic Union*, p 7.

2 See S R Mehrotra, "Imperial Federation and India, 1868-1917", *JCPS*, Vol I, no 1 (Nov 1961), pp 29-40.

3 Minutes of RT meetings, Plas Newydd, 4-6 Sept 1909, Lothian Papers, 11, fols 1-6. Jebb also thought that control of the dependencies might supply an "organic link" between Britain and the self-governing colonies: *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* (London, 1905), p 278.



themselves, but warned that their increasing hostility to "alien rule" meant that they were likely to be an increasing burden. It was therefore essential that they should come under the control of a government able to command the resources of the whole Empire. This, Curtis now admitted, ran directly counter to the view prevalent in Canada, "that these Possessions are held merely for honour and glory and profit . . . or that they might be given self-government and placed on a colonial footing".<sup>1</sup>

Curtis's argument failed to convince many of his Dominion "students". Indeed, as Kylie had predicted, reluctance to share in the control of India and the dependencies was the "real crux" of Dominion opposition to Curtis's scheme.<sup>2</sup> "How far is it a rather Pecksniffian trusteeship and how far the desire to have a regular stable government as a necessity for English merchants?", asked one student. If Britain wanted to continue ruling the dependencies, that was up to her, contended another: "it does not appear that this is a matter which should be included . . . [in an] arrangement for the preservation of the Empire".<sup>3</sup>

Curtis realised that the divergence of views could not simply be ignored. "We must face the question as to who is to be responsible for the great Dependencies."<sup>4</sup> Curtis's case was reinforced by Marris, who argued forcibly that, while the "egg" might be "solid" on the Dominions, it was weak, and potentially fatally so, on the dependencies. There would

1 [Curtis,] *Memoranda on Canada and the British Commonwealth* (1910), pp 26, 56 and *passim*.

2 Kylie to Kerr, 16 Oct [1910], (Kylie file,) RT (O) Papers.

3 *Round Table Studies, [First Series, vol I, 1911]*, pp 13 (contribution 3) and 13-15 (contribution 27).

4 Curtis to Oliver, 15 Aug 1910, Lothian Papers, 2, fols 135-51.

inevitably be opposition from India to any changes which would put her under the control of a body representing the Dominions, especially if such changes failed to take into account Indian aspirations to self-government.<sup>1</sup>

Kerr visited India in 1912. There, under Marris's influence, he composed "a proposal for altering the fundamental propositions of the 'Egg' so far as they relate to India".<sup>2</sup> Kerr adduced three reasons for proposing a limited Indian representation in an Imperial Parliament: previous British promises to associate Indians with the government controlling India, the need for informed discussion of Indian affairs, and the expediency of satisfying "the entirely proper aspirations and self-respect of the native Indians". Kerr suggested the inclusion of non-voting nominees of the Government of India, to provide "expert" knowledge, and two voting representatives of the Indian Legislative Council. He stopped short of suggesting any significant Indian representation: "they could not be given such representation . . . as would enable them, like the Irish today, in combination with large minorities, to turn out of office the Cabinet which ultimately controls Indian affairs".<sup>3</sup>

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1 Marris to P (Kerr), 10 July 1911, Brand Papers, box 2.

2 Kerr to Paterson, 18 April 1912, RT Papers, c 826, fol 2. For Marris's influence, see Marris to Curtis, 18 April 1912 (copy), Lothian Papers, 462, fol 15: "the main proposal is what I suggested to him in the beginning".

3 Kerr, "Memorandum on the Representation of India", [April 1912,] RT Papers c 826, fols 4-14.

Kerr's argument was supported by memoranda from four British officials working in India, W H Buchan, H T Cullis, E D MacLagan and E Molony.<sup>1</sup> All stressed the importance of making some concession to Indian opinion: as Cullis put it, "India is not governed by an autocratic bureaucracy, which can do as it likes, but by a very limited bureaucracy, very sensitive and very deferential to public opinion".<sup>2</sup> Further memoranda from Marris and Neston also supported Kerr's proposal. Both argued that Indian representation was, in Neston's words, necessary as a declaration of faith that "self-government" was "one of the ideals at which our rule in India is to aim".<sup>3</sup>

This proposal horrified a number of members of the Moot. Craik asserted that Indian self-government "is in the far distant future and may never arrive". Moreover, "I have at least an open mind as to whether when that day comes it would not be better for the Empire to get rid of India".<sup>4</sup> Malcolm deplored any attempt to transcend the racial barrier on which

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- 1 V H Buchan, "Memorandum on the Representation of India", 11 June 1912, RT Papers, c 826, fols 45-56; H T Cullis, "Notes on the Indian Memorandum", fols 75-8, and "General Note on the Indian Memorandum" (sent 12 June 1912), fols 79-85; E J MacLagan, "Note on the Memorandum", 2 July 1912, fols 208-10; E Molony, "Memorandum on India", 3 June 1912, fols 143-58.
  - 2 Cullis, "General Note", fol 79. Cullis, MacLagan and Molony argued for a larger measure of representation than that advocated by Kerr; Buchan was more cautious.
  - 3 Neston, "Memorandum on India and the Empire", Dec 1912, RT Papers, c 826, fols 86-104 (quotation from fol 87); Marris, "Memorandum on India and the Empire", Dec 1912, fols 160-66. Both argued for at least three voting representatives.
  - 4 Craik, "Note on the Principle of Indian Representation", 16 July 1912, RT Papers c 826, fols 223-7.

Empire rested: "Are we prepared to contemplate the ethnological collection into which our Imperial Parliament will develop?"<sup>1</sup>

Curtis also opposed the Marris/Kerr proposal: "until we are really prepared to accord the Dependencies governing power we are only laying up . . . a store of misunderstandings by pretending to do so". Nevertheless, he was struck by the suggestion that "self-government" should be the declared aim of British rule, although it was one whose realisation would come "long after ["the present generation"] have been in their graves". The adoption of this aim would re-emphasise the moral basis of British rule, and avoid the necessity of enunciating a separate ideal of citizenship for whites and non-whites. Therefore,

"the conception that Indians should be regarded as fellow citizens of one super-commonwealth with ourselves, and that to prepare them first for the control of their own sub-commonwealth and finally for an equal share in the control of the super-commonwealth should be our guiding principle".<sup>2</sup>

"Commonwealth" soon became the central concept in Curtis's propaganda for imperial union. Although his "Commonwealth" principle was in many ways "simply the old Liberal doctrine of the Victorian era",<sup>3</sup> it also reflected a thoroughgoing, illiberal authoritarianism.

"What is a State and in what respect does it differ from any other combination of individuals? Are we right in thinking that it is an organisation which claims to exercise an unlimited authority over its

1 Malcolm, "Memorandum", nd [1912], RT Papers c 826, fols 167-72.

2 [Curtis,] "Note on Philip Kerr's Indian Memorandum", [1912,] RT Papers c 826, fols 233-40.

3 Zimmern to J A Hobson, 13 Sept 1916, RT Papers c 817, fol 139.

members? . . . . Conversely is not a citizen a person whose legal obligation to obey the formally declared will of the state is unlimited?"<sup>1</sup>

In Curtis's view, the state rested on a "bond" which was "in the nature of dedication . . . at root not contractual, but sacramental"; it demanded from individuals "a sense of devotion" and of "sacrifice". What distinguished a "commonwealth" from other forms of government was that citizens were "dedicated" to each other, and not to some ruler claiming divine sanction. Citizens of a "commonwealth" owed unlimited obedience to the "general will" as expressed in law: but, as not all citizens were "responsible", not all could join in the making of law. "Commonwealth" was therefore not the same as "self-government", although it implied a tendency towards it. A "commonwealth" was constantly engaged in the process of widening its basis of active participation, but not in such a way as to endanger the stability of the state itself.<sup>2</sup>

Once again Curtis failed to convince his colleagues, who reacted to his new line in Imperial propaganda with consternation. It was decidedly "philosophical" and for that reason alone "poison to the Anglo-Saxon mind".<sup>3</sup> Craik complained that he could not understand Curtis's drift, and doubted if others would.<sup>4</sup> A second objection was that Curtis's thesis was

1 [Curtis,] "Memorandum" (nd: 1912), Brand Papers, box 2.

2 [Curtis,] *Round Table Studies, Second Series, Part A*, (1912,) "Introduction"; reprinted in *The Project of a Commonwealth, Part One* (1915) and published in *The Commonwealth of Nations, Part One* (London, 1916). Cf *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London, 1916), ch 19; "A Criterion of Values in International Affairs" in Kerr and Curtis, *The Prevention of War* (New Haven, 1923); *Civitas Dei, Volume One* (London, 1934).

3 Brand to Kerr, 23 July 1912, Brand Papers, box 182.

4 Craik, "Note on the Principle of Indian Representation", 16 July 1912, RT Papers c 826, fols 223-7.



patently untrue: as Brand confessed, "I cannot get clear in my head that . . . history can properly be moulded into its form".<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, Curtis's colleagues argued that Curtis's implicit assumption that other races were "unfit" for responsibility was, in the long term, unsustainable. Like Craik and Malcolm, Brand was

" . . . apprehensive of the logical application of these sweeping principles . . . . I never intend that the black man, however civilised, and however numerous, shall govern the Empire on an equality with the white . . . . I am not sure that all this is consonant with mutual citizenship in a Commonwealth. Why should a minority of the citizens decide that a majority is not fit for the full status of citizenship? We all of us agree that it is our duty to train the dependencies up to self-government and not treat their inhabitants as chattels. But cannot this be said without recourse to the theory of the Commonwealth?"<sup>2</sup>

Finally, Curtis's new line of argument was rejected as simply irrelevant to the problems which the Round Table existed to solve. As Craik argued, the Round Table's object was

"to make [the British Empire] still more powerful. This was to be done by calling upon the Dominions . . . to take a share in Imperial power . . . . A world-wide federation may be all very well - or it may not. At any rate it is not what we are proposing".<sup>3</sup>

Milner was apparently more sympathetic to Curtis, but by no means wholeheartedly so. "Why do you accuse me of being 'dedicated' to a 'commonwealth'?" he demanded of Oliver in 1914. "I am an out and out

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1 Brand, "Memorandum on the First Part of the 'Round Table Report'", Dec 1912, RT Papers c 777, fols 154-66.

2 Ibid; cf Malcolm, "Memorandum", nd [1912], RT Papers c 826, fols 167-72.

3 Craik, "Note on the Principle of Indian Representation", 16 July 1912, RT Papers c 826, fols 223-7.

imperialist and a great admirer of our friend L.C. But it is his work I admire not his philosophy. And I hate all kinds of flapdoodle more than words can say."<sup>1</sup>

"The Problem of the Commonwealth"

As Brand defined it, the object of Curtis's "Round Table Studies" was to provide answers to three separate questions:

- "1. Why the Empire cannot go on as it is ....
2. What changes are required for the Empire to be preserved? ....
3. Is the Empire worth preserving?"<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's attempts to answer these questions in a way acceptable to both the London and the Dominion groups had so far met with little success. Clearly, federation was more attractive in the abstract than as a specific and detailed proposal.

The Dominion groups contained many individuals who agreed with Curtis in theory. A few, in the words of the New Zealand secretary, "will follow till all's blue". But the majority was convinced that a long period of "education" was needed before conditions were ripe for a federalist movement.<sup>3</sup> The situation elsewhere was similar. In Australia the feeling was rife "that federation can only come as a means of reconciliation of divergent tendencies consciously felt and felt to be dangerous", which was not the case yet.<sup>4</sup> In Canada, the Round Table groups were coming under fire as a "Tory plot", ruling out any possibility of concerted action for

1 Milner to Oliver, 22 June 1914, Oliver Papers 86, fols 40-1.

2 Brand, "Memorandum", 25 May 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 85-89.

3 S A Atkinson to Curtis, 10 May 1912, RT Papers c 777, fols 67-69; cf Atkinson to Curtis, 17 Jan 1913, RT Papers c 778, fols 66-67.

4 F V Eggleston [to Curtis], 3 March 1913 (extracts), RT Papers c 778, fols 91-92.

some time.<sup>1</sup>

Curtis's response was now to urge caution and a protracted period of "study" before pressing on with the original plan.<sup>2</sup> However, some of the London group were anxious to enforce haste, an anxiety which was increased by the group's unplanned entry into the arena of controversy as the butt of attacks by Richard Jebb.

Jebb had originally been counted as a potential supporter of the Round Table project. His comments on the "original egg" were included in the first "annotated" volume.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, his espousal of co-operation and Tariff Reform led to an increasing opposition between his views and those of the Round Table. Under pressure from Curtis, Jebb excised an attack on the group from his *Imperial Conference* of 1911,<sup>4</sup> but by 1912-13 he was seriously concerned "that Imperial Federation is in the air". The result was a series of letters to colonial statesmen, and in May 1913 *The Britannic Question*, which contained a lengthy attack on the Round Table as "the intellectual guide of regenerate Conservatism".<sup>5</sup>

Curtis was pressed "to speed up", and was sent to Canada again to

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- 1 E J Kylie to Curtis, 10 Feb 1913, RT Papers c 778, fols 62-3; cf Perry to Brand, 22 Feb 1913, RT Papers c 778, fols 38-42.
  - 2 Curtis, "Memorandum", 25 Feb 1913, RT papers c 778, fols 60-61.
  - 3 Jebb's comments were given the number 118; see his copy of *Round Table Studies* in the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London.
  - 4 Jebb to Curtis, 4 May 1911, Jebb Papers; cf Curtis to Feetham, 27 April 1911, Curtis Papers 2, fols 68-71 ("he has given away the whole show").
  - 5 Jebb to Curtis, 15 April 1913, Jebb Papers; Jebb, *The Britannic Question* (London, 1913), p 77. Jebb and Fabian Ware also produced a short-lived magazine, *The Britannic Review*, to counter the Round Table's "centralist" arguments.

attempt to secure agreement to the fundamental propositions of the "egg".<sup>1</sup> This he was unable to do. After discussion with the leading Toronto Round Tablers, Curtis agreed that he would have to publish on his own responsibility, leaving the "study-groups" uncommitted to his proposals. Any propagandist movement in favour of federation would have to be created afresh, albeit largely centred on former Round Table members.<sup>2</sup>

However, any notion Curtis might have entertained that his new-found independence extended also to his relations with the London group was soon scotched by a letter from Brand.<sup>3</sup> Curtis was therefore urged to prepare a summary of Part III before writing the full version. This he did, but his draft<sup>4</sup> once more failed to win the group's agreement. Craik, Brand and Malcolm again submitted memoranda savaging Curtis's "principle of the Commonwealth" as obscure, inconsistent, dangerous and irrelevant.<sup>5</sup>

The outbreak of war naturally brought into question the need for Curtis to continue working on his *Round Table Studies*. However, Curtis argued strongly that some alteration of the constitutional relations of the Empire was now inevitable. It was therefore the Round Table's duty to be ready with an argument and scheme for the kind of rearrangement which it

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1 Minutes of RT meetings, 17 July 1913 and 25 Sept 1913, RT (O) Papers.

2 No contemporary record of these meetings can be found, but their outcome was summarised in Curtis to V Massey, 28 March 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 57-74.

3 Brand to Curtis, 12 Jan 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 1-3.

4 [Curtis,] *A Practical Enquiry into the Nature of Citizenship in the British Empire* . . . [1914], Curtis Papers 157, item 6.

5 Craik, "Memorandum", 22 May 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 90-101; Brand, "Memorandum", 25 May 1914, *Ibid.* fols 85-9; Malcolm, "Notes on the Printed Draft of Report Part III", 27 May 1914, *ibid.* fols 19-22.

had been founded to promote.<sup>1</sup> Others in the Moot agreed. Brand, for instance, thought that "if those who recognise that the present organisation of the Empire is only temporary do not take every advantage possible of the present favourable crisis, matters may be far more difficult 10 years' hence".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's plan was still for a three-part study of the Empire. In addition, the Moot had decided there was a need for a shorter volume, designed for popular consumption.<sup>3</sup> By the outbreak of war, only four of five instalments of Volume I were ready. Curtis now hurried off the final instalment of this volume, which was printed as a whole and without alteration as *The Project of a Commonwealth, Part I* in 1915, and published as *The Commonwealth of Nations, Part I* in early 1916.<sup>4</sup>

Curtis's task of finding a formula acceptable to the Moot was made all the more difficult by the circumstances of the war. The massive injection of manpower and resources by the Dominions clearly discredited any belief that "co-operation" was an ineffectual means of uniting the Empire. Brand now wanted this reflected in Curtis's work, arguing that "half a loaf is better than no bread".<sup>5</sup> Curtis, on the other hand, saw in

1 Curtis, "Memorandum on the Conduct of RT Work during the War", 19 Oct 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 102-113.

2 Brand to Sir R Borden, 8 Jan 1916, Brand Papers, box 182.

3 Minutes of RT meeting, 30 May to 2 June 1914, RT (O) Papers.

4 5,037 copies of the two editions were printed, of which 666 were sent out free, and only about 1800 sold by January 1917 (RT Papers c 783, fol 103). According to G L Beer, the book's lack of success was "mainly due to its length. It is neither history for the trained scholar, nor is it adapted to the needs of the busy layman" (Beer to Brand, 8 Oct 1917, RT Papers c 846, fols 134-35).

5 Brand to Sir Edmund Walker, 22 Feb 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 32-3.



the very fact of war evidence that "co-operation" had failed: had the Empire been united, the German alliance would have shied from resorting to force.<sup>1</sup>

To make matters worse, Brand and others took a stronger line on imperial taxation than Curtis wished, arguing that the power of direct taxation was an essential attribute of government.

"To pretend . . . that something that is not Organic Union is really Organic Union is in my opinion perfectly disastrous. It will raise all the hostility that Organic Union would raise and in addition can be absolutely riddled by anyone who cares to do so."<sup>2</sup>

Brand's line was supported by a majority of the Moot, who agreed a formula by which the Dominions would determine the distribution of taxation, while its collection would be left to the Imperial Government.<sup>3</sup>

The possible representation of India still divided the Moot. Another "Indian Moot" was set up in the autumn of 1915, and agreed that some declaration of British policy was a necessity. One of its members, Sir William Duke, again urged the Round Table to convince Indians: "India's part in the coming contention [over federation] must be very subordinate, but when forces may be rather nicely balanced it would be a pity if her contributions were limited to wails of protest".<sup>4</sup> Curtis himself was now

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1 Curtis to Kerr, 4 Sept 1915, RT Papers c 809, fols 78-81.

2 Brand to Kerr, 23 Feb 1916, Brand Papers, box 182.

3 Minutes of RT meeting, 2 March 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 52-3. Amery wrote up the Moot's proposals as Chapter 18 of the first (unpublished, but privately circulated) version of *The Problem of the Commonwealth*.

4 Duke to Curtis, 8 Feb 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 34-35.

coming round to the view that India should be given representation in the proposed Parliament, but many of his colleagues remained unconvinced. "We are divided among ourselves by the cleavage of opinion which divides the world," Curtis eventually declared.<sup>1</sup>

A further rift opened up on the form of the proposed imperial constitution. As the war progressed, Milner, Oliver, Amery and Grigg appear to have become increasingly cynical towards the parliamentary system on which Curtis sought to model his federation. As early as December 1914 Oliver declared that "if we win [the war] it will be because the spirit of the small remnant who hate and despise democracy . . . will save the country".<sup>2</sup> Milner claimed not to share Oliver's "aversion for democracy".

"I myself am perfectly indifferent. I regard it, like any other form of Government, as a necessary evil. . . . But I shy at the idea that you have only to reproduce in the sphere of Imperial politics the same system, which has begun to work so badly in domestic politics, in order to find a panacea for all existing ills."

Milner urged Curtis to "give men of independence and character a chance" by "producing something more like a Council of Statesmen".<sup>3</sup>

Curtis's draft of the shorter volume did include some concessions to his critics. His verbiage on the "commonwealth" was relatively restrained, the proposal of Indian representation was omitted, and the necessity of direct imperial taxation was asserted.<sup>4</sup> However, Curtis still failed to

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Milner, 24 Feb 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 38-41.

<sup>2</sup> Oliver (to Brand?), 26 Dec 1914, Brand Papers, box 2B; Oliver to Brand, 16 Feb 1916. Brand Papers, box 3. Cf Grigg (from the Western front) to Kerr, 23 Dec 1915, Brand Papers, box 3.

<sup>3</sup> Milner to Curtis, 27 Nov 1915, Curtis Papers 2, fols 188-98.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (unpublished version, 1915).

win the endorsement of his colleagues.<sup>1</sup> It was therefore agreed that Curtis should issue the work with a preface dissociating the Moot, as well as the other Round Table groups, from his conclusions. It was also agreed that Curtis was free not "to defer to other people's judgement" on matters where he was not convinced. Curtis did in fact modify the passages on Imperial taxation and on India to reflect more faithfully his own points of view.<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's problems were not yet over, inasmuch as the Canadian Round Tablers now launched vehement protests against the publication of his volume.<sup>3</sup> The proposals for Imperial taxation and control of the dependencies were particularly galling. Although they "must some day be faced by us all . . . if pressed now [they] will doubtless imperil the whole matter".<sup>4</sup> At most, the Canadians were prepared to support the publication of the first part of Curtis's work, in which it was argued that there was a problem to be solved. No solution should yet be offered.<sup>5</sup>

The Canadian view received support from some members of the Moot. Kerr questioned "whether it is sound strategy to begin your campaign by propounding the solutions in detail ahead".<sup>6</sup> Oliver, likewise, argued that Curtis's specific proposals could be published later "in response to a

1 Oliver's diary, 2 March 1916, Oliver Papers 216.

2 Curtis to Milner, 24 Feb 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 38-41, reporting the agreement reached between himself and Hichens, the latter acting on behalf of the Moot.

3 Glazebrook to Curtis, 29 Jan 1916, *ibid*, fols 16-17

4 Valke to Brand, 1 Feb 1916, *ibid*, fols 31-32.

5 Massey to Curtis, 2 March 1916, *ibid*, fols 54-56.

6 [Kerr] to Oliver, 24 March 1916, Oliver Papers 90, fol 68.

widespread demand".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, when the issue was thrashed out at a meeting early in April 1916, Curtis was able to command a majority of the London group. Curtis himself was despatched on a further tour "to explain the circumstances . . . and arrange for publication" in the several Dominions.<sup>2</sup>

In May 1916, therefore, more than six years after the inception of the Round Table project, Curtis's argument for imperial federation was finally published, in the form of *The Problem of the Commonwealth*.

Although Curtis's thesis was considerably more refined than that of his original "Green Memorandum", fundamentally it remained the same. The great question, as he put it, was "whether the Dominions are to become independent republics, or whether this world-wide Commonwealth is destined to stand more closely united as the noblest of all political achievements".<sup>3</sup> The Dominions, heirs to Britain's long tradition of progressive self-government, were not self-governing in the one area which really mattered. Distinct nations, each with its own "national consciousness", they could yet preserve and extend their own identities by agreeing to create a new Imperial Parliament. A price would have to be paid, especially by Canadians. After making allowances for "taxable capacity" (highest in Britain, lowest in South Africa), Curtis suggested the following distribution of the defence burden:

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- 1 Oliver to Curtis, 3 April 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 86-88.
  - 2 Minutes of RT meeting, 6 April 1916, RT Papers c 780, fol 90.
  - 3 Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London, 1916), Preface.

	<u>Actual expenditure, 1913-14</u>		<u>Suggested distribution<sup>1</sup></u>	
	£m	per cap	£m	per cap
Canada	2.704	0- 7-4.9	9.348	1-5-7.3
Australia	4.082	0-18-1.7	5.553	1-4-8
New Zealand	0.765	0-13-10.8	1.383	1-5-1.7
South Africa	1.345	0- 4-5.6	1.397	0-4-7.9
UK	72.346	1-11-9.6	63.561	1-7-11.2
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	81.242	1- 5-2.7	81.242	1-5-2.7
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

In return for such an increase in expenditure the Dominions would be assured of a supreme authority responsive to their needs, and an Empire which no other Power would dare to challenge.

#### Denise or Hiatus?

The outbreak of war was a disaster for the movement. On the one hand, it exacerbated the divisions which Curtis's "Studies" had already brought out; on the other, it ruled out the kind of long-term strategy which most believed to be necessary. As G L Beer emphasised in 1914, peace was bound to lead to an enormous "centrifugal tendency".<sup>2</sup>

Throughout 1915 Curtis urged his colleagues "to begin giving practical people the impression that the movement is leaving its academic stage".<sup>3</sup> He even proposed a new United Kingdom organisation, to press the Dominions "to realise and assume their responsibilities".<sup>4</sup> His suggestion was turned down, however, on the grounds that such an organisation would

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp 167-85.

<sup>2</sup> G L Beer to Curtis, nd [late 1914], RT Papers c 779, fols 82-83.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Grigg, 24 April 1915, RT Papers c 809, fols 25-26.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Kerr, 4 Sept 1915, RT Papers c 809, fols 78-81.



smack of the worst kind of centralism.'

Curtis encountered similar difficulties when he urged the Moot to use the magazine to support federation. He had always "understood that when the Egg was published the 'Round Table' magazine was to become definitely propagandist".<sup>2</sup> However, both Kerr and Oliver now argued against such a course. Nor did Oliver like Curtis's other suggestions, that the *Round Table* should give way to a new magazine (which would give the impression that the Round Table had "broken up in disorder"), or that the magazine should continue as a "bear-pit of controversy". The majority of the Moot agreed with him.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the *Round Table's* send-off for Curtis's book was limited to a brief mention of it as one which "every responsible citizen ought to read".<sup>4</sup>

The reception accorded Curtis's *Problem* in the British press was also far from encouraging. Of the London papers, only Dawson's *Times* was fulsome in its praise: the anonymous reviewer spoke of "the fundamental truth of these principles" and "the contagion of this faith".<sup>5</sup> The general Tory attitude was that Westminster would not reduce itself to a mere "provincial Assembly", and that the British constitution should continue to change by custom and not fiat.<sup>6</sup> The Liberal papers, on the

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 25 Nov 1915, RT Papers c 809, fols 92-94.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, "Memorandum on the Conduct of RT work during the War", 19 Oct 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 102-13.

<sup>3</sup> Oliver to Kerr, 29 May 1916, Brand Papers, box 3: cf Kerr, "The Round Table", 1 June 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 124-25; Minutes of RT meeting, 8 June 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 127-28.

<sup>4</sup> [Kerr,] "The Principle of Peace", *RT*, June 1916, p 427.

<sup>5</sup> *The Times Literary Supplement*, 25 May 1916.

<sup>6</sup> Eg *The Athenaeum*, 16 July 1916.

other hand, derided Curtis's philosophy as that of an expansionist, Prussianist "Kultur".<sup>1</sup>

It was not in Britain, however, but in the Dominions that Curtis sought the constituency through which to force Union on the Empire. Although the idea of using the Round Table groups as the media of a propagandist campaign had been abandoned, they could still serve a purpose in providing platforms for the discussion of Curtis's book, and forcing a recognition of the fundamental "problem".<sup>2</sup>

Arriving in Canada at the end of April 1916, Curtis reconciled the Canadian groups to the fait accompli of publication of his book, and secured the issue of a Canadian edition.<sup>3</sup> He also persuaded the groups to issue a "manifesto" which stated that Canada, while determined to remain within the British "Commonwealth", was keen to assume responsibility for defence and foreign affairs, and called on Canadian leaders to meet and discuss the question.<sup>4</sup> Again at Curtis's instigation, G A Warburton was hired to resuscitate the Western groups (now in disarray). Warburton proved quite successful, although he found that "it was . . . a very decided advantage to be able to state that the publication of this volume by Mr Curtis had been opposed by the leaders of the Round Table in

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<sup>1</sup> Eg J A Hobson, writing in *The Manchester Guardian*, 11 Sept 1916. Hobson's review sparked off a heated correspondence with Zimmern (RT Papers c 817, fols 139-60), with Hobson accusing Curtis of an "impudent piece of mental jugglery", and Zimmern accusing Hobson of being "remote from facts".

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, "Memorandum on the Conduct of RT work during the War", 19 Oct 1914, RT Papers c 779, fol 105.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Milner, 2 May 1916, RT Papers, c 780, fols 106-12.

<sup>4</sup> "Memorandum" [printed, Toronto, 1916,] RT Papers, c 802, fol 276.

Canada".<sup>1</sup> Curtis was successful in breathing new life into the Canadian organisation, but a Canadian movement for imperial federation was clearly still a long way off. Curtis himself left the Canadians "a bit critical . . . and disposed to think that he made a good many faux pas".<sup>2</sup>

In New Zealand and Australia, Curtis found a more encouraging response to his *Problem*, and an Australasian edition was swiftly produced.<sup>3</sup> Curtis found himself "talking to the converted" in New Zealand, and the Round Table groups readily agreed to extend their operations, forming new study-circles and special women's groups and agreeing to issue a "manifesto" on the same lines as the Canadian groups. Curtis made numerous speeches, which were fully and sympathetically reported in the press.<sup>4</sup> In Australia Curtis found the "disintegrationists" more numerous, a fact which he put down to Australia's large Irish population.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the Round Table groups were "in general agreement with the statement of the case contained in 'The Problem'", and "desirous of assisting in every way possible".<sup>6</sup>

From Australia, Curtis sailed to India, with the intention of forming new Round Table groups from amongst the British people stationed there. A

<sup>1</sup> G A Varburton and W F Bowles, "Report Upon Their Visit to the West . . ." [April 1917], RT Papers c 846, fols 231-46.

<sup>2</sup> Wrong to Kerr, 20 July 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 139-41.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis, *Notes on the Progress of the Movement in Australia* (Bombay, 1916, "for private circulation".)

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to the Moot [Aug 1916], RT Papers c 780, fols 158-68.

<sup>5</sup> Curtis to Milner, 16 Oct 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 189-95.

<sup>6</sup> C H Vickens to Curtis, 20 April 1916 (Australia file,) RT (O) Papers.

but on ICS employees taking part soon scotched his plans. Nevertheless, Curtis ended up staying for 18 months, unable to resist the temptation of becoming embroiled in Indian politics.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Moot was unwilling to endorse Curtis's *Problem*, most members still supported the idea of federation, and many felt the need for some forward move while conditions were still favourable. In Curtis's absence, the Moot therefore laid plans for a new network of "Commonwealth Societies", with a definite commitment to the creation of an Imperial Parliament. Curtis's *Problem* would not have to be accepted in its entirety, "partly because it went into too great detail, and partly because there is a good deal of disagreement about some of its propositions even among those who accept its main conclusions". In particular, there would be no commitment against "intermediate" steps.<sup>2</sup> Draft "proposals of agreement" were drawn up, listing the powers envisaged for an eventual Imperial government: defence, foreign relations, the dependencies, taxation "from specific sources only", citizenship (but not residence and migration), and a veto on Dominion legislation.<sup>3</sup>

Curtis's reaction was, somewhat surprisingly, to protest at the drawing up of "articles of faith".<sup>4</sup> Perhaps because of his protests, nothing more was done. The employment of various members of the Moot in

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<sup>1</sup> For Curtis's activities in India, see below, pp 192-97.

<sup>2</sup> [Coupland?] to Glazebrook, 22 Nov 1916, RT Papers c 802, fols 264-72; cf Kerr, "Memorandum", 1 Dec 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 178-81.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr, "Rough Draft Proposals of Agreement", 29 Dec 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 105-08.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Coupland, 15 March 1917, RT Papers c 810, fols 12-16.

Lloyd George's new administration also limited its capacity to reconstruct the Round Table organisation. Moreover, the decision to summon an Imperial Conference in 1917 - long called for by the *Round Table* - inevitably preoccupied the movement.

The actual course of the summer's Imperial gatherings provided the Round Tablers with cause both for optimism and for dismay. On the one hand, the innovation of an Imperial War "Cabinet" appeared to be a big step towards the kind of constitutional reconstruction which the Round Table existed to promote. Moreover, Resolution IX of the Conference agreed the need for a convention to consider Imperial relations after the war. On the other hand, Borden and Smuts both ruled out "the federal solution". Smuts, at a Parliamentary banquet in his honour, claimed that the Dominions' war effort showed that the work of "union" was "very largely . . . already done". Harcourt wrote to him with the gleeful verdict that "tonight was the funeral of the Round Table".<sup>2</sup>

At a Round Table dinner for Smuts on 4 May, Milner welcomed what he saw as a step towards simplifying British foreign policy, ensuring its continuity, and diminishing its control by the parties at Westminster. Kerr and Brand went further, endorsing the principle of "consultation", and adding only that the new "Imperial Cabinet" should be accompanied by an

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<sup>1</sup> See, eg, [Grigg,] "The Dominions and the Settlement: a Plea for a Conference", *RT*, March 1915, pp 325-44.

<sup>2</sup> W K Hancock, *Smuts, Vol I, The Sanguine Years* (Cambridge, 1962), pp 429-32. Wyndham and Duncan "thought that [Smuts] went as far as he possibly could in advocating some form of imperial reconstruction": Wyndham to Coupland, 8 July 1917 (SA file,) *RT* (O) Papers.



"Imperial Conference" representative of all parties in the various national legislatures. They were subsequently criticised for neglecting "the full Round Table point of view", but asserted

"that full federation was at the present moment impracticable and that they, personally, were highly satisfied that such a step forward as that suggested could be taken at all".

For Kerr, the co-operation scheme provided "the nucleus both of a future Imperial executive and of a future Imperial Parliament", which was "better than a shadowy scheme of federation for which opinion was not yet ripe".<sup>1</sup>

Brand now wanted the group to recognise "the necessity for an intermediate stage of co-operation", while reiterating "our main principle of Organic Union for the ultimate future".<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Malcolm insisted that "co-operation in this or any other form will fail".<sup>3</sup> This was an argument which the London group was unable easily to resolve, although its members shared a "general belief that there is no immediate prospect of organic union".<sup>4</sup>

Uncertainty over the effects of the Conference resolutions and a perceived need "of defining more clearly the nature and purpose of the Round Table movement" combined to recommend to the Moot a convention of Round Table groups. The proposal was made in a letter to group secretaries

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of discussion, 4 May 1917, Lothian Papers 474, fols 4-8; cf Kerr to Curtis, 24 April 1917, Lothian Papers 33, fols 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> Brand, "Memorandum", 7 May 1917, Brand Papers, box 41.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm, "Addendum to Mr Brand's Memorandum", 25 May 1917, Brand Papers, box 41.

<sup>4</sup> Coupland to Curtis, 22 May 1917. RT Papers c 810, fols 66-68.

in October 1917.<sup>1</sup> Until such a convention could be held, there could be no "enlargement in the scope of the Round Table propaganda".<sup>2</sup>

The proposal of a convention served only to delay the taking of decisions. The Australian and New Zealand groups set about organising preliminary national conventions, but these did not meet until the summer of 1919. When the Canadian reply eventually arrived, in February 1919, it was that individuals might attend in a personal capacity, but that there was no possibility of producing anything like a Canadian mandate. The Canadian Round Tablers were "in favour of the continuance of the Round Table groups but . . . shaky in regard to a specific doctrine".<sup>3</sup>

If the Round Table movement "failed", it was thus partly for want of trying: the organisation never became propagandist, in the sense Curtis had originally envisaged. Dominion hesitation was obviously an important factor, but so too were the divisions within the Moot, and the rapidly changing situation created by the war. The 1917 Conference threw the movement into disarray: if federation could be achieved gradually, there was no place for Curtis's "pistol policy". Finally, the end of the war brought a multitude of new problems, as well as removing the most pressing reason for federation. Some new and longer-term strategy had clearly to be devised, even if the ultimate aims of the movement still held good.

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<sup>1</sup> Coupland to RT Group Secretaries, 18 Oct 1917, RT Papers c 802, fols 111-12; cf Coupland to Curtis, 9 July 1917, RT Papers c 810, fols 109-10.

<sup>2</sup> Coupland to B Dunfield, 17 June 1918, RT Papers c 802, fols 119-22.

<sup>3</sup> Glazebrook to Coupland, 13 Feb 1919, RT Papers c 802, fols 179-81.

#### 4. PROBLEMS OF EMPIRE AND FOREIGN POLICY, 1910-14

The primary focus of Round Table activities in 1910-14 was preparation for an eventual federationist movement. The existence of this overriding aim tended to determine *Round Table* coverage of practical issues, as a matter of tactics as well as of ideology.

It later became a maxim of the group that "our first duty is not to consider what interests people, but rather to interest their minds in what really concerns them".<sup>1</sup> In the period 1910-14, the Moot's appraisal of such issues centred very largely on Anglo-Dominion political relations, and to a lesser extent matters relating to foreign policy. India received less coverage than any of the Dominions. There was one article on Egypt, but none directly on any of the other dependencies.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Round Table and Prewar Politics

The Round Table was unusual amongst contemporary pressure groups in having substantial financial resources at its command; a respected magazine as its mouthpiece; and a network of associated Dominion groups which might act not only as the means of influencing policy in the Dominions, but also as proof of the Round Table's claim to speak for the whole Empire.

Potentially, therefore, the Moot was well placed to exercise a unique and considerable influence on policy and policymakers.

Nevertheless, the very nature of the Round Table enterprise, the aim of imperial federation and the strategy adopted for achieving it, severely circumscribed both the London group's desire and its ability to act on the

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Hitchens et al, 6 Aug 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fols 627-32; cf Curtis, *Letters to the People of India* (London, 1918), p xii.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C, "Round Table Coverage, by Subject".

level of day-to-day, "practical" politics. Imperial federation was clearly a long-term goal. Even its most enthusiastic supporters admitted that an extended process of "education" would be necessary before it could realistically be sought. By 1913 Curtis was convinced that a "revolution in thought" was needed, of the same magnitude as that which followed Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.<sup>1</sup> The bulk of the Round Table's efforts was, necessarily, concentrated on the level of "public opinion", not of existing party politics. Indeed, party politics and politicians could themselves be seen as both cause and consequence of the defects of the existing system, and, as Curtis pointed out, "nobody likes to vote away his own importance".<sup>2</sup>

The Round Table strategy was built around the notion of "co-operative study". Consequently there was some nervousness about publicising the activities of the central Moot, and a need not to alienate Dominion Round Tablers. The London group could ill afford to be tarred with the brush of partisanship. The Dominion groups had the additional task of avoiding the appearance of being directed from London. It was agreed early on that

"in cases . . . when questions of importance to the whole Empire come up for discussion in the United Kingdom or any of the dominions, the communication of facts or suggestions to people in other parts of the Empire should be effected by correspondence between individuals and not through the medium of the Dominion Offices of the review".<sup>3</sup>

Most correspondence between London and Dominion Round Tablers, even about the review, was between individuals and not between groups. Nevertheless,

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, "Memorandum", 25 Feb 1913, RT Papers c 778, fols 60-61.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, Plas Newydd, 4-6 Sept 1909, Lothian Papers 11, fol 5.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "Private Memorandum", [1910,] RT Papers c 776, fols 73-75.

this decision reflected deep ambivalences within the Round Table organisation, between study and propaganda, individual and collective action, autonomy and centralism, which were never satisfactorily resolved.

Further constraints on the Round Table's activities as a pressure group were placed by the limited extent of the Moot's leverage within British politics. Richard Jebb claimed in 1913 that,

"welcome to Conservatives as a splendid champion of Authority, and to Liberal partisans as an imperialist ally against Tariff Reform, the Round Table brilliantly achieves that inter-party equilibrium which is a stronger position for getting things done than independence of political parties".<sup>1</sup>

Jebb was right in identifying the aim of Round Table strategy, but he was undoubtedly wrong in attributing such a large measure of success to the group. Aristocratic, Oxford, Cecilian and Milnerite connections gave the younger Round Tablers privileged access to a number of key figures in both leading parties, such as Sir John Simon, Winston Churchill, Austen Chamberlain and Sir Edward Carson. Nevertheless, access by no means guarantees influence, and here the Moot was handicapped both by its lack of an organised political following, and by its close attachment to Lord Milner. The latter was something of a political troublemaker, loathed by Liberals, unwelcome to the Unionist leadership, influential mainly on the imperialist wing of the Tariff Reform movement. The younger Round Tablers alienated even that, presently powerless, constituency.<sup>2</sup> The London Moot in fact occupied an extremely marginal position in British politics, from

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Jebb, *The Britannic Question* (London, 1913), p 78.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp 127-31.



which it could hope to exercise influence only in situations where its aims were consonant with those of more powerful interests and personalities; or where there was a policy vacuum needing to be filled, and no other groups or individuals willing to fill it.

Finally, the Moot's ability to act as a pressure group was constrained, to a surprising extent, by its inability to reach agreement within itself. Despite the relative homogeneity of the group, there existed differences of view and emphasis, both on the question of closer union itself and on the numerous questions thrown up by day-to-day politics, which only became clear once those questions began to be tackled.

It is extremely difficult to evaluate the Round Table's influence on the level of "public opinion". Curtis certainly thought that the group was acting successfully, claiming in October 1914 that he could see a "change . . . in the attitude of public men and of the press in the last four years" which "has been largely due to the steady leavening effect of the Round Table".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, when it came to the more easily quantifiable level of influence on "men and measures", it is clear that the Round Table was altogether less successful. Only rarely did the London group attempt to exert pressure, and when it did so, the constraints on its action became all too apparent.

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, "Memorandum on the Conduct of RT Work during the War", 19 Oct 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 102-13.

### Federation versus Co-operation

Two intersecting pressures conspired to create the "Imperial problem". The first was the intensification of Great Power rivalry which forced all nation-states and Empires to seek a more effective mobilisation and management of their resources. The second was "colonial nationalism".

The Round Tablers were convinced that the Empire could not survive in an increasingly hostile world by relying on the resources of Great Britain alone. Britain's defence expenditure was already the highest in the world: £67.8 million in 1910, compared to Russia's £62.8 million, Germany's £61.4 million and France's £52.4 million.<sup>1</sup> In per capita terms, Britain's defence burden was, relatively, higher still. The Dominions, by contrast, lagged far behind, as the following figures (published in the first issue of the *Round Table*) illustrated:

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<u>Per capita</u> defence expenditure, 1908-09 <sup>2</sup>	
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United Kingdom	1 - 6 - 3
Canada	0 - 3 - 2½
Australia	0 - 4 - 10½
New Zealand	0 - 5 - 0½
South Africa	0 - 6 - 8

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The present-day demography of the former Dominions suggests that the addition of their resources to those of Britain would, ultimately, have made little difference to the Empire's ability to maintain itself as a

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<sup>1</sup> J J Eddy and D M Schreuder (eds), *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism*, (London and Sydney, 1988), p 36.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "Anglo-German Rivalry", *RT*, Nov 1910, pp 32-33. The figure for South Africa related to white population only (as in subsequent years).

"world-state". Nevertheless, it is important to remember the prevailing assumptions of the period.

There was, at the time, little recognition of ecological restraints on population growth, and great faith in deforestation, irrigation and agricultural innovation. Dominion politicians were themselves great "boosters": indeed, their rôle in organising loans and capital projects made them professionally so. Laurier famously spoke of the new century "belonging to Canada". A compatriot, writing in the *Round Table*, agreed "that the Twentieth Century is hers by right".<sup>1</sup> The notion of vast "empty spaces" was hard to shake off. Dove, writing in 1921, reckoned that Canada and Australia between them possessed the resources for a population of 200 million.<sup>2</sup> If Dominion resources could be mobilised to the same extent as Great Britain's, then the future of the Empire would, at the very least, look more secure.

By 1909-10 the Dominions already controlled their local defence forces, and had won the right (despite initial obstruction by the Admiralty) to construct their own navies; they were beginning to develop treaty-making powers (as between Canada and the United States, and between South Africa and Portugal); and, unchecked by the Empire's residual authority, they were passing domestic legislation (notably on "Asiatic" immigration) which was bound to affect their relations with foreign states. As Kerr commented in 1911, defence and foreign policy "have already ceased to be" the "sole and exclusive concern of the United Kingdom".

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<sup>1</sup> [W L Grant,] "Canada and Anglo-American Relations", *RT*, Dec 1913, p 108. J V Daffoe believed that Britain would be dwarfed by Western Canada alone within 20 years: Kerr, *Notes from Tour of Canada*, 1909, Lothian Papers 5, fol 35.

<sup>2</sup> [Dove,] "The Migration of the Races", *RT*, March 1921, p 270.

Nevertheless, it was "impossible for the Dominions to set up independent foreign policies and independent defensive systems . . . without destroying the Empire".<sup>1</sup>

The "Imperial problem" was, therefore, one of finding some means whereby Dominion resources could be mobilised in support of the Empire, yet Dominion aspirations to self-government and to control the disposal of their resources could be accommodated. Curtis, of course, believed that he already had the solution.

An alternative did exist, and was to cause considerable problems for the Round Table project. Indeed, the Round Table's inability to develop an agreed strategy for dealing with it must be considered one of the main reasons for the group's "failure". The essence of this view was co-operation between sovereign nations still owing allegiance to a single Crown.

"The existing governments, whether in London, Ottawa, Wellington, Melbourne or Pretoria, were all to stand on an equal footing, side by side, severally administering and controlling the external, as well as the internal, affairs of their respective countries, but maintaining the unity of the Empire by co-operation and also by loyalty rendered to one crown and one flag."

Curtis characterised this as the "Canadian view". It "failed to help" the Round Table, except in proving that the "Imperial problem . . . had not been thought out."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The New Problem of Imperial Defence", *RT*, May 1911, pp 231 and 252.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, *The Round Table Movement* . . . (privately printed, 1913), pp 7-8.

Curtis's hostility to co-operation was frequently reiterated, although rarely with the clarity and persuasiveness which the significance of the matter demanded. He claimed that no form of co-operation had ever been devised which was both effective and lasting. "Alliances can be made and unmade": that was the lesson of history, from the Confederacy of Delos to the recent experience of the Inter Colonial Council in southern Africa.

In Curtis's view, co-operation was fraught with constitutional difficulties. The principle of responsibility would be severely impaired, with members of the decision-making body or "executive" responsible to half a dozen legislatures, mostly weeks away. The "executive" could hardly refrain from taking important decisions until all the legislatures had been consulted. The legislatures could only exercise their responsibility after decisions had been made, by removing their executives and repudiating their decisions. Decisions of the "executive" could therefore be reversed, i.e. they were not decisions but merely provisional agreements.

If co-operation implied a liberum veto, the whole of Imperial policy would be at the mercy of each and every small Dominion; if it implied majority voting, both the constitutional difficulties and the danger of political discord would be greatly increased. Britain would have to reserve the right of unilateral action, and therefore would have to continue bearing the whole cost of Imperial responsibilities. The Dominions would therefore see no reason to increase their commitments. Nevertheless, they would continue to be implicated in Britain's actions. "The relationship of dependency remains unaltered, however studiously it may be veiled under courtesies and forms."

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<sup>1</sup> See especially [Curtis,] *Round Table Studies* [First Series, Vol 1, 1911], Introduction, pp ix - xiii (quotation from p xiii).



Others in the Moot were less convinced, and certainly less dogmatic on this point. None doubted that co-operation would eventually prove inadequate. Nevertheless, Curtis's forcing of the Dominions' dilemma was thought, in the short term, to be a gamble: after all, it was not inconceivable that Canada and South Africa would prefer independence to federation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, co-operation had its positive aspects: it would serve the process of education, and it would at least make a start on the problem of inducing the Dominions to share Britain's Imperial commitments. Finally, it was not clear that the breakdown of co-operation would be either immediate or dramatic. Kerr believed "that the existing arrangements - anomalous as they are - can be made to work for some time to come, provided the governments concerned mean to make them work".<sup>2</sup>

The Round Table's unresolved disagreements over co-operation provided an undercurrent of irresolution whenever the group attempted to confront the practical and immediate issues of Anglo-Dominion relations. That the Round Table should confront those issues was not doubted. As Dawson wrote in 1909, "Some of us have to talk or write about these things in public now" and it was obviously desirable "to help to keep them on lines which fit in with . . . our general scheme".<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the pages of the *Round Table* itself had to be filled and, as Curtis observed, the purposes of the Review as agreed by the Moot included "from the outset . . . the propagation of views".<sup>4</sup>

The early meetings of the Round Table were able to do no more than

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Question of Policy" [1910], Lothian Papers 14, fol 286.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "Memorandum", nd [1911], (Kerr etc file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> G G Robinson to Curtis, 26 July [1909], Lothian Papers 11, fols 27-29

<sup>4</sup> [Curtis,] "Memorandum", 18 May 1910, RT Papers c 776, fols 64-72.

float a few ideas on the "subsidiary" subject of Imperial co-operation. The approach of the 1911 Conference provided the Round Table with the opportunity of producing more substantial and considered proposals.<sup>1</sup> A sub-committee was convened over the summer of 1910, and memoranda were produced by Kerr, Amery and Malcolm. These were forwarded to Curtis in New Zealand, who also wrote his own memorandum at the request of the Governor, Lord Islington. Amery wrote a further memorandum at the end of the year, which (after amendment by Kerr and Milner) was submitted to a dozen leading British Cabinet politicians.<sup>2</sup>

There was a substantial measure of agreement between the Round Tablers' various memoranda. All suggested that the separation of the Dominions department from the rest of the Colonial Office (agreed by the 1907 Conference) should be completed; that each Dominion should have its own Ministry of Imperial Affairs, in regular communication with London; that the Conference should be presided over by the Prime Minister and not the Colonial Secretary; and that it should be provided with a confidential resumé of foreign, defence, Indian and Colonial policy by the appropriate British ministers. The latter point was also argued, forcefully, by Kerr in the *Round Table*.<sup>3</sup>

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1 See John Kendle: "The Round Table Movement, New Zealand, and the Imperial Conference of 1911", *JCPS*, Vol III (1965), pp 104-17, and *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences, 1887-1911* (London, 1967), chapters 7 and 9. The following interpretation differs in emphasising the extent of divergence between members of the Moot, and also of Curtis's responsibility for the subsequent débâcle.

2 Kerr to G Craig-Sellar, July 1910, RT Papers c 776, fols 22-24; [Copy of Curtis's memorandum,] Lothian Papers 13, fols 181-217; [Kerr,] "The Imperial Conference", RT Papers c 776, fols 137-44; Amery, "Memorandum" (circulated version), (Amery file,) RT (O) Papers.

3 [Kerr,] "The New Problem of Imperial Defence", *RT*, May 1911, pp 231-62. Selborne raised the matter of the PM presiding: *Hansard (Lords)*, 5th series, Vol VII (5 April 1911), cols 1047-49.

In addition a number of proposals were put forward, especially by Amery and Curtis, which were not supported by the others. Amery was particularly keen to widen the Conference by including parliamentary delegates, and to press for the establishment of an Imperial secretariat. Curtis, on the other hand, was more interested in improving communications by enhancing the rôle of Dominion High Commissioners in London. He also proposed raising a £100 million loan to pay for new shipbuilding, its burden to be distributed between the governments of Britain and the Dominions according to population.

Amery aimed to build an effective machinery for co-operative decision-making, which in time would grow, almost imperceptibly, into an "Imperial union", with powers over tariffs and other matters as well as defence. In the short term, he was little worried by confusion between advisory and executive functions. Kerr described Amery's position as reflecting "transparent" political ends and suggested instead

"that . . . our aim should be not to build up the Imperial Conference as an organ of government, but a) to alter its constitution so as to increase its value as a means of educating the Governments and peoples of the Dominions . . . and b) to put it as often as possible to the test . . . so as to reveal the defective working of the co-operative system".<sup>1</sup>

Curtis went further than Kerr. In his view, Imperial Conferences were mere "lunbug". The important thing was to bring home to the Dominions "the real issues". Himself "soaked in colonial conditions", he was convinced that union would only come about as a result of a deliberate step. If his proposals exacerbated the Dominions' tendency to see themselves as separate

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Imperial Conference", loc cit. Cf Kerr to Amery, 16 Dec 1910, (Amery file,) RT (O) Papers.

nations, all well and good: he was himself "not afraid of that tendency and in this point I am a disciple of Jebb's".<sup>1</sup>

At a dinner for subscribers after the Conference, Milner claimed that the Round Tablers "had altered the whole course" of Imperial relations by their lobbying for the Dominion premiers to be initiated into the arcana imperii.<sup>2</sup> In other respects, however, the Moot's early hopes of "stage managing the Conference"<sup>3</sup> were severely disappointed.

The débâcle of Sir Joseph Vard's confused and misjudged advocacy of an "Imperial Council" is well known, as is the ostensible cause - his reading of Curtis's "Green Memorandum", a copy of which found its way into Vard's hands accidentally, as Curtis later emphasised.<sup>4</sup> It appears, however, that Curtis's responsibility for the episode was larger than he liked to admit. His "Islington memorandum", without elaborating any precise scheme of federation, pointed firmly in that direction. Its relatively brief treatment of substantive proposals was prefaced by a long section explaining that co-operation was historically and logically doomed, and that New Zealand's greatest contribution would be to put "the two alternatives of increasing separation or closer union".<sup>5</sup>

While in New Zealand Curtis clearly hoped that Vard would engage the "real issues": he even envisaged the Conference as the ideal opportunity to launch "a new sort of Selborne memorandum", with Vard giving it "a good

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Kerr, 10 Sept 1910, Lothian Papers 12, fols 99-108.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Lady Anne Kerr, 20 Jan 1912, Lothian Papers 462, fol 2.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 29 July 1910, Lothian Papers 11, fols 87-98.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Feetham, 27 April 1911, Curtis Papers 2, fols 68-71.

<sup>5</sup> [Copy of Curtis's memorandum,] Lothian Papers 13, fols 181-217.

send off".<sup>1</sup> The Moot was more cautious, thinking Ward "a lightweight" and his only likely supporter, Fisher, "a freak - a Labour P.M.". <sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, in his *Round Table* article preceding the Conference, Kerr urged the assembled premiers to face "the problem of the future relations" between Britain and the Dominions.<sup>3</sup> It was the manner in which the premiers did so, rather than the fact that they did, that constituted such a setback.

After the Conference, some members of the Moot were reluctant to engage in any private lobbying before Curtis completed his *Round Table Studies* and the Moot agreed on a precise set of objectives. When, in 1912, Steel-Maitland invited the Round Table to submit suggestions for him to pass on to Bonar Law, Brand immediately called on the Moot to reject Steel-Maitland's proposal. After some reflection, Oliver joined him, arguing that "the Moot has not yet arrived at that degree of certainty with regard to central principles as to justify it in tendering advice to practical politicians on current affairs".<sup>4</sup> On only one issue does the Moot appear

<sup>1</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 14 Oct 1910, Lothian Papers 12, fols 153-56, quoting a previous letter from Curtis.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 31 Aug 1910, Lothian Papers 2, fols 92-95.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "The New Problem of Imperial Defence", *RT*, May 1911, p 260.

<sup>4</sup> Steel-Maitland's suggestion reported in Minutes of RT Meeting, 9 May 1912, RT Papers c 777, fols 12-15; Brand's opposition the subject of Curtis to Brand, 9 June [1912], Brand Papers, box 2; Oliver's remarks in "Memorandum of Objections . . ." with Oliver to Paterson, 21 June 1912, RT Papers c 777, fols 92-95.



to have attempted to influence the political debate before 1914 - the question of local navies versus contributions.

The Defence Conference of 1909 had endorsed the principle of local navies. At first, the Moot also accepted the principle as, in a phrase coined by Milner, "creating fresh centres of strength" for the Empire.<sup>1</sup> An early memorandum by Kerr argued that

"no Dominion Parliament will ever vote any substantial sum to be handed over to be spent by a foreign [*sic*] department of state. Contribution is simply a method of salving the conscience, and calming the fears of the electorate, at a minimum cost to themselves".<sup>2</sup>

Neither South Africa nor New Zealand subsequently embarked upon an autonomous naval programme, but Australia did so with enthusiasm, and Canada, under Laurier, promised to do the same. It was Laurier's defeat in 1911, by an unholy alliance between Borden and Bourassa, both pledged to repeal his Navy Act, which again raised the whole question.

The Moot had felt increasingly uneasy with the implications of the local navy scheme, especially since the Australian and Canadian legislation left the question of wartime control (implicit in the 1909 agreement) unresolved.<sup>3</sup> In August 1911, the *Round Table* quoted Selborne that "the sea is all one, and the British Navy therefore must be all one".<sup>4</sup>

1 Milner, *Speeches Delivered in Canada during the Autumn of 1908* (Toronto, 1909), p 32.

2 Kerr, "Naval Defence and the Dominions", 9 Dec 1911, Brand Papers, box 2; cf [Kerr,] "The Defence Conference", [1909,] Lothian Papers 12, fols 174-80.

3 [Kerr,] "The New Problem of Imperial Defence", *RT*, May 1911, pp 249 ff.

4 [Craik,] "Colonial Neutrality", *RT*, Aug 1911, p 435.

Laurier's defeat was welcomed by the Moot, whose members now saw an opportunity to link naval contributions to representation in the Committee of Imperial Defence. Canadian Round Tablers were sent a detailed plan of action with which to "take the lead in saving the Empire".<sup>1</sup> A small committee (Wrong, Kylie, Glazebrook, Willison and Walker) dutifully drew up a memorandum linking the issues of contribution and representation, and Wrong despatched a letter to Borden urging an "impressive" programme, claiming all-party support.<sup>2</sup> The London section of a special article of September 1912 maintained the impetus, welcoming Borden's declared intention of introducing a new Navy Bill as opening "a new era in the Empire's history".<sup>3</sup> A further article in March 1913 asserted that "unity of control is all-important".<sup>4</sup> W H Kelly, one of the Australian Round Table's most prominent sympathisers, was instructed by Kerr to "keep your eye on Borden". Nevertheless, any hopes that Australia might abandon her own policy were misplaced: as Jose, *The Times'* correspondent in Australia, pointed out, Australians "do think it unwise to dig up seedlings every week to see how they are rooting".<sup>5</sup>

Despite concerted activity, the Round Table's attempts to influence the Canadian naval debate came to nothing. Borden's Bill was rejected by

1 Curtis to G M Wrong, 12 April 1912, RT Papers c 777, fols 22-26.

2 "Memorandum", (May 1912,) RT Papers c 777, fol 34; Wrong to Borden, 8 July 1912, *ibid*, fols 124-25.

3 [Grigg, Perry and Stevenson,] "Canada and the Navy", *RT*, Sept 1912 (pp 627-56), p 637.

4 "Policy and Sea Power", *RT*, March 1913 (pp 197-231), p 231.

5 Kerr to W H Kelly, 28 Nov 1911, RT Papers c 797, fols 27-30; Extracts from a Letter from A W Jose, 16 Oct 1912, *ibid*, fols 48-51.

the Senate, and no further attempts to secure a Canadian naval contribution were made. Kylie blamed Canadians' "ignorance of foreign affairs", but also emphasised the "New World's" fear of being caught up in the struggles of the Old. His own disappointment was plain: there had been too much "flinging facts at a great conception . . . . Local self-government is an excellent thing, but if carried so far as to destroy larger units of society it may prove a misfortune".<sup>1</sup>

By the outbreak of the First World War, the advocates of imperial unity cannot be said to have achieved any practical success. Imperial federation was as far from realisation in 1914 as in 1910. Little had been done to improve the machinery for consultation, either. The disparity in defence expenditure between Britain and the Dominions remained striking, as Curtis's figures showed:

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<u>Per capita defence expenditure, 1913 - 14<sup>2</sup></u>	
United Kingdom	1 - 11 - 9.6
Canada	0 - 7 - 4.9
Australia	0 - 18 - 1.7
New Zealand	0 - 13 - 10.8
South Africa	0 - 4 - 5.6

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Nevertheless, as the figures also showed, all the Dominions except South Africa had vastly increased their defence expenditure in the five years since 1908-09. In Australia's case, the increase was three-fold; or, from

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<sup>1</sup> (Kylie,) "The New World and the Old: A Canadian View", *RT*, Sept 1913, pp 637-47.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London, 1916), p 167.

less than a fifth to more than half of Britain's per capita expenditure. Australia was, of course, the only Dominion with its own navy. It might reasonably have been asked, therefore, whether insistence on the centralisation of defence contributions was not, in the short term at least, counter-productive.

### Tariff Reform

Joe Chamberlain's Tariff Reform campaign originated as an attempt "to cement the union of states beyond the seas . . . to consolidate the British race".<sup>1</sup> Many of the key figures in the early Round Table were also keen Tariff Reformers. Milner instituted a preference for British goods in South Africa. On his return, he declared himself a Tariff Reformer "of a somewhat pronounced type"<sup>2</sup>, and set about supporting Chamberlain's campaign with gusto. Amery was keener still, denouncing free trade as "the negation of the whole meaning and essence of human society, the denial of law and morality".<sup>3</sup> Others who supported Tariff Reform included Selborne, Oliver, Dawson and Grigg.

The majority of the Moot (and especially of the "Kindergarten") was less convinced. There were a number of reasons for this. First, it was by no means clear that the Dominions (especially Dominion manufacturers) really wanted a closed Imperial system. Malcolm's experience in Canada convinced him that "with the exception of a few journalists who have

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1 C V Boyd, *Mr Chamberlain's Speeches*, Vol 2 (London, 1914), p 143.

2 Milner, *Imperial Unity: Two Speeches* (London, 1907), p 19.

3 Amery, *The Fundamental Fallacies of Free Trade* (London, 1906), p 5.

affinities with the Unionist press at home nobody in Canada cares a damn whether Tariff Reform is brought about or not".<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, something that was clear was that a majority in Britain itself was opposed to Tariff Reform. The Liberals, after all, had won the 1905 election largely through opposition to "food taxes". At a more sophisticated level it was recognised that Britain's interests as a manufacturer, trader and banker could not be sufficiently catered for by the Empire alone.<sup>2</sup> Tariff Reform was clearly not a vote-winner. Cecil (himself an unrepentant free trader) believed that the Unionists' commitment to Tariff Reform "will permanently keep them out of power".<sup>3</sup>

The British context also provided a third reason for Round Table non-commitment. Tariff Reform had clearly become a party issue; whereas the Round Table hoped that federalism would secure the support of all parties, and therefore agreed, early on, the need to avoid charges of partisanship. Amery later recalled that this was the main reason why the Round Tablers failed to support Tariff Reform: they "devoted themselves largely to converting Liberal opinion, believing that they had the Conservatives already behind them".<sup>4</sup>

Finally, many of the younger Round Tablers thought that the Unionist proposals went much further than Dominion policies, by calling for tariffs

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm to C Onslow, 22 Jan 1910, Onslow Papers (Guildford), Private Papers C 173/25/49. I am indebted to Chris Collins of Nuffield College for this reference.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Sykes, *Tariff Reform in British Politics, 1903-13* (Oxford, 1979); cf "The Unionists and the Food Taxes", *RT*, March 1913, pp 232-76.

<sup>3</sup> Cecil to Kerr, 3 Oct 1911, (Cecil file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Amery to J Conway, 21 Feb 1952, (ed ctee file,) *RT* (O) Papers.



for the benefit of the Dominions rather than of the UK itself. In Kerr's view, such calls for sacrifice were profoundly dangerous. Instead, he suggested that British tariffs should be framed according to British needs, and that only then should preferences be given, leading to customs agreements "frankly based on the self interest of each part".<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Brand argued that tariffs and preferences were an essential component of national social structures, and would therefore, even under a federal system, be a matter for conference rather than centralised decision-making.<sup>2</sup> Sir Keith Hancock described "tariff personality" as an essential ingredient in Dominion development.<sup>3</sup> This fact was brought home by the Dominion contributions to Curtis's *Round Table Studies*.<sup>4</sup> "Is it heretical to say that defence is at bottom the only reason for the union of the Empire?", Brand asked, rhetorically, in rejecting the Tariff Reformers' arguments.<sup>5</sup>

While the Round Tablers fought shy of including tariffs in their scheme for Imperial union, there were some signs of an attempt to mediate between the two extremes of absolute free trade and complete Imperial autarky. Thus Curtis, who was most emphatic on the need to leave the

<sup>1</sup> Kerr, "British Politics and the Empire", [1911,] (Kerr etc file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Brand to Kerr, 4 Jan 1913, Brand Papers, box 182.

<sup>3</sup> W K Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol 2, part 1 (London, 1942), p 85.

<sup>4</sup> See, eg, [Wellington group,] "Notes on the Question of Finance", 25 May 1911, pp 11-14 of [Round Table] *Group Notes*, No 2 (1911).

<sup>5</sup> Brand, "Memorandum", [1911,] RT Papers c 776, fols 107-12.

Dominions fiscal autonomy, was also reported to be "very anxious to find, if it be possible, an alternative policy of Preference, which does not involve the food tax".<sup>1</sup> Even Cecil admitted the case for retaliatory duties; and he was also prepared to support a measure of Imperial preference, if food taxes could be avoided.<sup>2</sup> However, nothing concrete appears to have been suggested.

Amery, in particular, tried hard to convince his colleagues that their proposed Imperial Parliament should have powers to introduce a *Zollverein*<sup>3</sup>; nevertheless, the majority realised that his ideas were as out of touch with Dominion opinion as the Manchester School he so fervently attacked. The Round Table's stance also brought criticism from a number of other keen Tariff Reformers. Austen Chamberlain in 1913 begged the Round Table "not to 'crab' any movement which led in the direction of Imperial Union".<sup>4</sup> The same year, Jebb's *Britannic Question* explicitly pitted his own vision of an Empire based on economic integration against the Round Tablers' political movement.

In an interesting variation on the theme of the Round Table's "failure", John Turner has argued that the movement's reluctance to support Tariff Reform was both proof and cause of its effective marginalisation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Salisbury to Brand, 11 June 1912, and Salisbury, "Memorandum on Preference unconnected with the Taxation of Food", nd [1912], Brand Papers, box 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cecil to Kerr, 28 Nov 1911, enclosing correspondence with C Heaton-Ellis, (Cecil file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> See his "Memorandum", Jan 1911, RT Papers c 776, fols 113-23.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Austen Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside* (London, 1936), p 353.

<sup>5</sup> "The Round Table and British Politics", unpublished paper presented to the Second Lothian Memorial Conference, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London, 3 to 5 April 1989.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the arguments against commitment on this issue were substantial. Commitment would have scuppered any hopes of obtaining Liberal support. Moreover, if the views of Dominion Round Tablers were any guide, it would have entailed a far more arduous task in the Dominions. Eggleston thought Jebb's agenda "remarkably nebulous and fantastic".<sup>1</sup> From Canada, J A Stevenson was even more emphatic: "I detest the Jebb brand of imperialist and will fight them [*sic*] to the end".<sup>2</sup>

### "Asiatic" Migration

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the European empires has been the extent to which they re-arranged the demographic map of the world. Migration, both voluntary and involuntary, was central to the establishment and functioning of the early British Empire. British migration, at least, was also, in the view of the "new imperialists", crucial to its future. Cecil Rhodes was not alone in contending that the British "are the finest race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race".<sup>3</sup>

The idea that people of European descent had a right to colonise whichever lands they saw fit was virtually unquestioned in Round Table circles. In 1917, Curtis proposed that a frontier belt of "Central Asia" should be lopped off from India and handed over for European colonisation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eggleston to Grigg, 18 June 1913, RT Papers c 798, fols 39-46.

<sup>2</sup> Stevenson to Kerr, 25 Aug 1910, (Stevenson file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> [Rhodes's original Will,] Milner Papers 467, fols 146-55.

<sup>4</sup> Eg Curtis to Coupland, 19 May 1917, Lothian Papers 472, item 3.

As late as 1926, Dove was asserting "that one of the still unsettled questions of the world is how far the hot countries (such as Guyana or Fiji) can be made permanently inhabitable for Europeans".<sup>1</sup>

While the Round Tablers were thus interested in schemes to extend European colonisation, it was primarily with the established colonies of settlement that they were concerned. Here, they emphasised two distinct but complementary priorities: to prevent non-European immigration, and to encourage British, as opposed to other European, immigration. During the early years of the Round Table, it was the first of these which received most attention.

Not all the early Round Tablers were "racist" in the sense of believing in inherent or genetic differences between racial groups. Nevertheless, their views on race relations generally included a belief in the inferiority of non-European cultural values, fear of economic competition (based on the notion that non-Europeans required lower living standards than Europeans), and opposition to "miscegnation" and all other forms of pluralistic development.<sup>2</sup>

Such views were commonplace in contemporary Britain. Nevertheless, they were given particular resonance by the "Kindergarten's" experience in South Africa. There, the future Round Tablers accepted uncritically the myth that South Africa was a "white man's country". They saw the greatest

<sup>1</sup> Dove, "The Colonial Problem of Europe", 21 July 1926, Lothian Papers 20, fols 390-97.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp 178-83.

threat to this ideal arising not from the black African majority, but from "Asiatics", who were making serious inroads into white economic hegemony, and who (more than Africans) resisted European cultural assimilation. As Assistant Colonial Secretary for the Transvaal, Curtis bore a particular responsibility for combatting the "Asiatic" menace. He it was who suggested that Indians in the Transvaal be made to carry fingerprinted passes, and that further Indian immigration be halted, in order to save South Africa from "the fate which has overtaken countries like Mauritius and Jamaica".<sup>1</sup>

It was not just in South Africa that opposition to "Asiatic" immigration was in the ascendant.<sup>2</sup> Even in relatively liberal New Zealand, where Maoris and British were described as enjoying "excellent relations", the *Round Table* reported widespread hostility towards Asians.<sup>3</sup> From British Columbia, the immigration of "unassimilable material" from Asia was described as "a calamity": if unchecked, it would reduce the province to the state of Hawaii, where "only millionaire employers and coolie labourers remain".<sup>4</sup>

In Australia, unsurprisingly, such views were held most trenchantly. "White Australia" was an article of faith amongst Australian Round Tablers.

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 4 May 1907; see R A Huttenback, *Gandhi in South Africa* (Ithaca, 1971), pp 158-61 and *passim*; M K Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa* (Madras, 1928), ch X.

<sup>2</sup> Avner Offner's essay on the "'Pacific rim' societies" in J J Eddy and D M Schreuder, *op cit*, demonstrates the extent to which such opinion was a component of contemporary "Colonial Nationalism".

<sup>3</sup> "New Zealand: History and Politics", *RT*, Feb 1911, pp 206-29.

<sup>4</sup> "Canada: Oriental Immigration: A British Columbian View", *RT*, March 1914, pp 330-36.



Eggleston was "absolutely convinced that the existence of British civilisation in the Dominions is bound up with the exclusion of Asiatics".<sup>1</sup> In a frank exchange with the London group (prompted by the latter's censorship of some particularly outspoken Australian comments) he warned that, if mis-handled, "a final difference of opinion on this point might be a difference too deep to be bridged over by any form of organisation". On the other hand he also believed that, if handled sympathetically, the Dominions' policies could provide a formidable argument for strengthening ties with the "mother-country". As an example, he forwarded some doggerel on the theme of a "union more profound" ensuring Australia's future as "an Aryan land . . . for ever".<sup>2</sup>

That the Dominions' immigration policies could be worked to the advantage of the federationist cause was recognised early on by the Moot. An article by Kerr in the second issue of the *Round Table* warned that

"In the long run the project of a 'White Empire' will only be accomplished if the Empire has the strength to resist the terrific expansive pressure of the teeming millions of Asia. And that strength it will be able to exert only if all its parts are absolutely at one on the policy they should pursue".<sup>3</sup>

In the following issue Kerr examined the prospects for Japanese colonisation in mainland Asia, and concluded that it was not alarmist to

<sup>1</sup> Eggleston to Grigg, 18 June 1913, RT Papers c 798, fols 39-46.

<sup>2</sup> Eggleston to Grigg, 14 Oct 1913, RT Papers c 798, fols 125-32; Eggleston to Curtis, 26 Feb 1913, RT Papers c 778, fols 68-71 (enclosing "A Welcome" by Bernard O'Dowd).

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance", RT, Feb 1911, p 144.

believe that the Japanese saw far better prospects in Australasia and North America.<sup>1</sup>

The Moot was determined to dispel the impression that Britain was out of sympathy with the Dominions on this issue. Grigg reassured Eggleston that "everybody here [in Britain] believes in the white Australia policy and is determined to do the utmost to support it".<sup>2</sup> Curtis devoted a whole chapter of his *Problem of the Commonwealth* to the question, defending the Dominions' policies and urging critics to "think of London with six Asiatics to every European". The Empire, while it might have to deal with the consequences of Dominion immigration policies, should have no control over their formulation.<sup>3</sup>

By the outbreak of the First World War, discriminatory immigration policies were, of course, firmly in place in all of the Dominions. Nevertheless, Dominion opinion would not be completely satisfied until Asian immigration was stopped at source.

Curtis was the prime mover behind a wartime attempt to reach an agreement between the Governments of India and of the Dominions, based on the principle of "reciprocity". Following talks with Borden and his Minister of the Interior, Dr Roche, Curtis produced a paper outlining his proposals, which he then discussed with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. Again he argued that the "establishment of any Asiatic community in the

<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Emigration Question in Japan", *RT*, May 1911, pp 263-69.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Eggleston, 12 Dec 1913, *RT Papers* c 798, fols 141-42.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London, 1916), ch 5, esp pp 60-62.

heart of a European community, however small", was "productive of social, moral and political evils". In order to avoid charges that restrictions on Indian migration were motivated by "racial" animosity, "reciprocal" agreements should be reached whereby Indians would be allowed to visit the Dominions only for the purposes of study and business, and similar restrictions would apply to Dominion citizens wishing to travel to India.<sup>1</sup>

While Curtis was in India, Kerr pressed his proposals on a sympathetic Secretary of State, Austen Chamberlain. The India Office drafted a "Note on Emigration" substantially embodying Curtis's proposals. This was to be put forward at the 1917 Conference by Meston and Sinha, but the latter objected, sensing a betrayal of the wider interests of Indians.<sup>2</sup> The question of Indian migration was again raised at the 1921 Conference, when all the Dominions except South Africa agreed to end disabilities on domiciled Indians in return for an end to migration. The latter part of the bargain held, but the former did not: further disabilities were subsequently introduced.<sup>3</sup>

From the Dominion point of view, the issue of Asian immigration was dealt with satisfactorily, and subsided as a "live issue" between the wars.

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Lord Chelmsford, 2 Nov 1916, Lothian Papers 33, fols 2-7; Chelmsford to Austen Chamberlain (extracts), 2 Nov 1916, *ibid* 34, fols 14-17.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Chamberlain, 28 Feb 1917 and 7 March 1917, Lothian Papers 32, fols 2-4 and 5-7; "Note on Emigration" and Chamberlain to Kerr, 24 April 1917, *ibid* 34, fols 10-13.

<sup>3</sup> See, eg, "Canada", *RT*, Sept 1923, pp 388-405.

The Round Table ignored pleas from correspondents in India to criticise the discrimination suffered by Asians.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the Moot was also reluctant to publish any re-statements of the Dominion case. An exception was Eggleston's "White Australia" article of 1921, which was only published after pressure from the Australian Round Tablers.<sup>2</sup> The reasons for the Moot's reticence are not hard to find. The initial expectation that the Dominions' policies could easily be worked to the advantage of "closer union" was clearly misplaced. The Dominions were suspicious of British attitudes, while the British found the effect of the Dominions' policies to be distinctly problematical. In the aftermath of the First World War, with Japan's position in the Pacific enhanced and the Raj increasingly dependent on Indian goodwill, the dangers of a divergence of interests between Britain and the Dominions was greater than ever. It was thus self-evidently politic to allow the problem to be discreetly set to one side.

#### India and the Dependencies

The *Round Table's* coverage of events and policies in Britain's dependent Empire was by no means as thorough as its treatment of the self-governing Dominions. Over the period November 1910 to June 1914, articles on Britain's dependencies accounted for only 7.5% of total *Round Table*

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<sup>1</sup> See, eg, telegram from Rushbrook Williams, 5 July 1921, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999.

<sup>2</sup> [Eggleston,] "White Australia", *RT*, March 1921, pp 312-39; L Foster, *High Hopes* (Melbourne, 1986), pp 90-91.

coverage, and just 0.6% if India is excluded.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the London Round Tablers were indifferent to British rule in the dependencies. On the contrary, some regarded it as "the biggest of all reasons for the existence of this stupendous Commonwealth".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's doctrine of the Commonwealth, of course, made this argument peculiarly his own, although both Kerr and Coupland anticipated him in this respect. After his visit to India in 1912, Kerr reported himself "now a convinced Imperialist" who believed "the British Empire to be the greatest agency for assisting and promoting the development of the non-self-governing races that exists today".<sup>3</sup> In a talk given to the Raleigh Club the same year, Coupland adopted an almost apocalyptic tone in stressing the "INCENSE" importance of the Empire's "supreme historical mission", that of substituting order for conflict in the contact of races: without it, he contended, the world would be condemned to "the authentic Armageddon".<sup>4</sup>

Many commentators have seen the disintegration of British Imperial power as the result of collapse at the centre, or (more generously) of an acknowledgement by Britain's Imperial rulers that "Empire" was a thing best rid of. In such an interpretation the Round Table group, and in particular

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C, "Round Table Coverage, by Subject". Lady Lugard was asked to write on Nigeria, and Hugh Clifford on the Straits Settlements, but neither was able to do so.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, *The Round Table Movement* (1913), pp 14-15.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr, *What the British Empire Really Stands For* (Toronto, 1917: address delivered to Canadian groups, 30 July 1912), pp 3 and 7.

<sup>4</sup> Coupland, "Raleigh Club", nd [1912], Coupland Papers 1/2/3.



its promotion of a "principle of the Commonwealth", holds a special place. Classically, S R Mehrotra stated in 1961 that the Commonwealth doctrine "represented almost a revolution in imperial thinking" which "repudiated the concept of the 'two empires' - the concept that there could be under the British flag one form of constitutional evolution for the west and another for the east". Thereby the Round Table was to be found "enunciating the principle . . . [and] laying the foundations of our present multi-racial Commonwealth".<sup>1</sup>

This idea, of a radical break with previous and prevailing conceptions of Empire, was assiduously cultivated by members of the Round Table themselves. Curtis (for the benefit of an Indian audience) described in revelatory terms his own conversion to a new conception of the Empire-Commonwealth.

"I remember discussing the Indian anarchist troubles with Mr Marris, as we walked through a forest on the Pacific slopes [of Canada, in 1909], and his views so startled and arrested my attention as to make a lasting impression on my mind. Self-government, he urged, however far distant, was the only intelligible goal of British policy in India. It needed a guiding principle and no other was thinkable . . . .

"It was from that moment that I began to think of the British Commonwealth as the greatest instrument ever devised for enabling that principle to be realised, not merely for the children of Europe but for all races and all kindreds and peoples and tongues."<sup>2</sup>

From 1912 Curtis marked the juncture by substituting the term "British Commonwealth" for "British Empire", a practice subsequently adopted by the

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<sup>1</sup> S R Mehrotra, "Imperial Federation and India, 1868-1917", *JCPS*, Vol 1, No 1 (1961), pp 29-40.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, *Dyarchy* (London, 1920), pp 41-2.

Round Table, originally in March 1914 and preponderantly after 1918.

What might be described as the Curtis/Mehrotra version of events, in which Curtis and, after some hesitation, the Round Table as a whole embraced a radically new conception of Imperial relations, begs a number of questions. Was the "Commonwealth doctrine" in fact so "revolutionary"? Did it effect a truly significant break with previous Imperialist traditions, including the "two empire" concept? Were its purposes and consequences entirely emancipatory?

By the time of the Round Table's foundation it was, indeed, commonplace to write of the British Empire as consisting of "two empires". Seeley urged his audience "to think much more of our Colonial than our Indian Empire", and Froude contrasted "empire" with a "commonwealth . . . held together by common blood".<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Milner emphasised the distinction, declaring in 1908 that the idea of "Colonial Self-Government" for India was "a hopeless absurdity".<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the blurring of the racial and cultural aspects of British imperialism permitted the existence of a tradition, most eloquently expressed by Macaulay, which looked to the ultimate export of "European institutions", at least to India.<sup>4</sup> Sir Charles Dilke believed in "the possibility of planting free institutions among the dark-skinned races of

1 J R Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (Cambridge, 1883), p 11.

2 J A Froude, *Oceana, or England and Her Colonies* (London, 1886), p 12.

3 Milner, "The Two Empires", *Proc RCI*, Vol 39 (1908), p 333.

4 Macaulay's speech on the East India Company Charter, 10 July 1833: *Hansard (Commons)*, 3rd Series, Vol 21, col 536.

the world".<sup>1</sup> Moreover, by 1909, the year of the Morley-Minto reforms, possibility was, albeit slowly and hesitantly, in the process of becoming actuality in India. Curtis's personalisation of his own exposure to the idea of self-government for non-Europeans, if not disingenuous, must therefore be regarded as evidence of considerable naiveté. Indeed, other Round Tablers were aware of the historical tradition behind the idea: the principle that the Empire's "more civilised members are responsible for the government and training in self-government of peoples not yet able to govern themselves" Kerr described as "Empire in the old-fashioned sense".<sup>2</sup>

Early memoranda by Curtis dwelt (in terms reminiscent of Froude) on "self-government" as an "instinct" brought to the colonies by their European settlers. He and the Moot considered it essential that the self-governing colonies should share in the government of India and the dependencies. It was only when travelling round the Empire that Curtis saw the necessity of argument on this point. He met many colonials unwilling to meet the financial burdens involved. Furthermore there were those who took the view that there was something almost immoral about Empire.<sup>3</sup> As he later wrote, in "these young democratic communities the principle of self-government is the breath of their nostrils. It is almost a religion. They feel as if there were something inherently wrong in one people ruling another".<sup>4</sup> Curtis returned to England and set to work constructing his

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<sup>1</sup> C V Dilke, *Greater Britain* (London, 1868), vol 2, p 407.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "A Programme for the British Commonwealth", RT March 1922, p 246.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Oliver, 15 Aug 1910, Lothian Papers 2, fols 135-51 (copy in RT Papers, c 870). See also the comments printed in Curtis's "Annotated Memorandum", quoted above, pp 88-89.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis, *A Letter to Philip Kerr*, 13 Nov 1916 (Bombay, 1916).

"principle of the Commonwealth", which was thus the direct result of a perceived need to propagandise the cause of empire.

Curtis contended that the Empire was worth preserving precisely as having worldwide and peculiar "responsibilities". He contrasted "the weakness of the sense of mutual duty" amongst "Orientals" with the strength of it in Britain and her self-governing colonies.<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth "does not mean and can never mean universal suffrage"; rather, it was rule by "all who are fit", ie "Aristotle's 'aristocracy'". "It recognises that there are men unfit for the task of government, who must therefore be governed by those who are fit."<sup>2</sup> Put simply, the Commonwealth entrusted political power to as many "as can be given the vote without endangering the state too much".<sup>3</sup>

The whole thrust of Curtis's argument was designed to ensure the strengthening of Imperial control over India and the dependencies, as he made clear to a Canadian correspondent in 1913:

"It would be different if I thought that the time was on hand when India, Egypt, Ceylon, the Malay Straits or Nigeria would govern themselves. Withdraw British government and so far as I can judge they would inevitably relapse into blood-stained chaos, and their chance of learning how in time to govern themselves will be thrown back for centuries".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Curtis,] *Round Table Studies, Second Series, Part A* (1912), Curtis Papers 156/9, pp 1-18.

<sup>2</sup> [Curtis,] *A Practical Enquiry into the Nature of Citizenship* . . . [the "Strawberry Memorandum"] (1914), Curtis Papers 157/6, pp 1-23; cf *The Capital Question of China* (London, 1932), p 300.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Lady Selborne, 8 Dec 1915, Curtis Papers 2, fols 202-3.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to E J Kylie, 10 Jan 1913, RT Papers c 778, fols 21-4.

The main significance of Curtis's Commonwealth paradigm was thus not in stating the "ultimate goal", but in setting it within a context in which the Imperial power retained full authority over the process. As Grigg wrote, in a paraphrase of Curtis approved by the latter, "the salvation of the most backward races is not to be achieved by Europeans repudiating the task of control, but only by exercising a control from first to last in the interest of the lower races as well as the higher".<sup>1</sup>

#### "Home Rule All Round"

Ireland was the oldest and, at the time of the foundation of the Round Table, the most acute of Britain's Imperial problems. It was one which subjected the *Round Table's* claim to a non-partisan status to its severest test. Yet it was also one which the Moot could hardly avoid tackling if the group was to fulfil its other leading claim, to provide informed coverage of the most important issues confronting the Empire. The way the Moot did so revealed much about the Round Tablers' views on the conflict between Nationalism and Imperialism. Ever optimistic, they consistently under-estimated the support for and demands of Nationalism, and over-rated the extent to which Imperialism could accommodate the Nationalist challenge.

Early *Round Table* articles dwelt at length on the troubled history of Ireland, but rejected Nationalist "myths" of a separate and homogeneous

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<sup>1</sup> Grigg, "Substitute Introduction to the Whitsuntide Egg", [July 1914], RT Papers c 779, fol 58. For Curtis's approval, see Curtis to Grigg, 29 July 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 76-9.



Irish nationhood, and disputed claims of a consistent British malevolence.<sup>1</sup> Much emphasis was placed on the "tribalism" of early Irish society, which constituted a menace to the development of a stable and ordered society in Britain. It was "from this difference in the levels of civilisation in the two islands that subsequent disasters have largely sprung".<sup>2</sup> In Ireland itself, "specific features of primitive society have outlived their age and become ingrained in the character of [its] people". Such features included "blindness to realities, aversion to compromise, a morbid concentration on itself, a disregard for all interests but its own, [and] an ingrained belief in the virtue of violence".<sup>3</sup> To ascribe all Ireland's woes to her connection with Britain was itself a psychological deformity of the Irish Catholic mind, an irrational and irresponsible "paranoia".<sup>4</sup>

The members of the Round Table found it hard to understand Irish Nationalism other than by reference to such pathological symptoms. It was frequently pointed out that the Irish already enjoyed the same measure of self-government as did the other constituent parts of the United Kingdom; indeed, with 103 MPs, rather more than was equitable. Other nationalities within the United Kingdom - the Scots were always the favourite example - were content with their constitutional rights. Was there not something self-evidently retrogressive about the demands of Irish Nationalism?

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<sup>1</sup> See especially [Grigg,] "The Irish Question", *RT*, Dec 1913 (pp 1-68), pp 12-22; [Kerr,] "Ireland and the Empire", *RT*, Sept 1916 (pp 614-51), pp 615 ff.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The Irish Crisis", *RT*, June 1918 (pp 496-525), p 497.

<sup>3</sup> [Curtis,] "Ireland", *RT*, June 1921 (pp 465-534), pp 465, 506.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Milner, 16 Oct 1916, *RT Papers* c 780, fols 189-95.

"If democracy . . . has made a great discovery since the cult of little nations in the middle of the last century, it is that local patriotism and self-interest are not antagonistic, but complementary and essential, to patriotism and self-interest of a broader kind."<sup>1</sup>

While all the Round Tablers' instincts were thus with the Unionists in rejecting Home Rule of any kind for Ireland, it was nevertheless clear that, as Milner put it to Balfour early in 1910, "we are in for Home Rule in some form".<sup>2</sup> The Round Tablers realised - as, indeed, did other thoughtful Unionists, such as J L Garvin - that a "purely negative" attitude on the part of the opponents of Home Rule would lead to "entire failure".<sup>3</sup> The best that could be hoped for was "a compromise under which Ireland cannot really become a nation, and the United Kingdom cannot really remain united".<sup>4</sup> The solution which seemed to offer the best hope of such a compromise - and which, in various combinations and with varying degrees of commitment, the Round Tablers were prominent in urging - was "Home Rule All Round".

The idea of an all-round devolution was by no means original to the

1 [Grigg,] "The Irish Question", *RT*, Dec 1913, p 63.

2 Milner to Balfour, 17 April 1910, quoted in J E Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal Solution* (Kingston, 1989), p 112. In this book and in his article "The Round Table Movement and 'Home Rule All Round'", *Hist Journal*, vol II (1968), pp 332-53, Kendle has described in considerable detail Round Tablers' advocacy of federalism for the UK. I have therefore confined my discussion to the salient points.

3 [Grigg,] "The Irish Crisis", *RT*, March 1914, p 215. For Garvin see A M Gollin, *J L Garvin and the Observer* (London, 1960), pp 168-234.

4 [Brand and Craik,] "Home Rule", *RT*, June 1912, p 428.

Round Tablers.' Nevertheless, the most persistent advocate of federalism at this time was himself a Round Tabler: F S Oliver. The author of the widely-read "Pacificus" articles in *The Times* of 1910 and of many subsequent articles and pamphlets, Oliver provided a trenchant yet cogent argument for compromise on the basis of all-round devolution.

"Home Rule All Round" offered many attractions to Unionists who realised the impossibility of maintaining the status quo. It circumvented the unwelcome necessity of recognising the special character of Irish nationality, by placing Ireland on exactly the same footing as the other parts of the United Kingdom. It necessitated a scaling down of the powers the Liberals were prepared to concede ("powers . . . wider than those possessed by any state or provincial legislature in any Dominion"<sup>2</sup>). It set firm limits to Redmond's "march of a nation" by entrenching in law the supreme authority of the United Kingdom/Imperial Parliament. It obviated all the difficulties of previous Home Rule Bills which threatened to leave the Irish with a voice in mainland domestic affairs. Finally, it was a measure which could be justified in itself, as a remedy for the "congestion" of Parliament, and as a recognition of Adam Smith's maxim that nothing should be centralised that could equally well be left to local government.

Oliver's argument for all-round devolution encountered a mixed reaction in the early Koot. Hichens (himself an avowed "stick in the mud")

<sup>1</sup> See Kendle, *op cit*, Chapters 1-4; also George Boyce, "Federalism and the Irish Question" in A Bosco (ed), *The Federal Idea*, Vol 1 (London, 1991), pp 119-38.

<sup>2</sup> [Brand and Craik,] "Home Rule", *RT*, June 1912, p 440.

mentioned Brand and Kerr as particularly "keen devolutionists".<sup>1</sup> Curtis found the "congestion" argument a useful one for the purposes of his "Green Memorandum", although rather as making a case for relieving the United Kingdom parliament of its Imperial business than for relieving it of its local business.<sup>2</sup> He subsequently put the argument for devolution to a "mootlet" in South Africa which included Amery and Cecil; the reaction was generally hostile, particularly on the grounds that Ireland could not afford a legislature of its own.<sup>3</sup> By September Curtis was convinced (in contrast to Lord Grey) that the Imperial federationists were best advised to treat the units of the Empire "as we find them".<sup>4</sup>

Back in London, others were going through a similar difficulty in deciding on the issue. A subcommittee on "congestion" was set up in January 1910, consisting of Selborne, Cecil, Steel-Maitland, Craik and Kerr. Considerable evidence of "congestion" was accumulated, providing the basis for a joint study published anonymously by Macmillans, and for two substantial articles in the *Round Table*.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the committee was unable to agree that devolution was the only solution to this problem:

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- 1 Hichens to Curtis, 19 Dec 1910, Curtis Papers 2, fols 41-44.
  - 2 *Memoranda on Canada and the British Commonwealth* [1910], pp 85-98.
  - 3 Hichens to Milner, 21 March 1910, Lothian Papers 11, fols 79-83. A committee of Hichens, Cecil and Oliver was set up to inquire into the financial relations between Britain and Ireland, concluding (as the Primrose Committee was to) that any Irish legislature would have to be heavily subsidised by Britain.
  - 4 Curtis to Kerr, 19 Sept 1910, Lothian Papers 12, fols 109-22. Oddly, Kendle, "The Round Table Movement and 'Home Rule All Round'", p 334, treats this letter as proof of Grey's influence on Curtis.
  - 5 *An Analysis of the System of Government Throughout the British Empire* (London, 1912); [V P Johnston,] "The Congestion of Business in the House of Commons", *RT*, Dec 1911, pp 58-95 and [Curtis,] "The Better Government of the United Kingdom", *RT*, Sept 1918, pp 750-77.

Cecil, for instance, was convinced that changes in Parliamentary procedure would suffice.<sup>1</sup>

The constitutional crisis and the inter-party Conference of 1910 gave a temporary boost to hopes of a compromise on devolutionist lines. Milner and Amery, reluctantly, became convinced that not all would be lost by such a solution; on the other hand, Selborne, Cecil, Steel-Maitland and Hitchens remained obdurate.<sup>2</sup> As a result of further discussion, it was finally agreed that, as it dealt with the division between national and local rather than between imperial and national issues, federalism for the United Kingdom could not be regarded as in any way preliminary or essential to Imperial federation.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Kerr now suggested that "Imperialists must . . . look with disfavour on the proposal . . . for it is likely to delay the accomplishment of Imperial union by removing one of the more pressing arguments for it".<sup>4</sup>

"Home Rule All Round" again increased in attractiveness following the introduction of the third Home Rule Bill in 1912. Among the Koot there was still no unanimity on the question, although Selborne and even Hitchens were now reconciled to a federalist solution. For some, it offered a welcome possibility of dishing the Liberals; for Oliver and possibly Craik, it was

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<sup>1</sup> See Cecil to Paterson, 22 April 1913, RT Papers c 781, fol 129.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 29 July 1910, Lothian Papers 11, fols 87-98; 10 Aug 1910, *ibid* 2, fols 84-91; 31 Aug 1910, *ibid* 2, fols 92-95.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of RT Meeting, Blackmoor, 12-13 Nov 1910, RT Papers c 776, fols 79-81.

<sup>4</sup> [Kerr,] "Home Rule and the Empire", [1911,] (Kerr etc file,) RT (O) Papers.



a desirable objective in itself. In either case it was clear that, as Oliver put it, "Federalism is not going to be accepted, if at all, purely on its merits, but largely because it enables a number of solemn and eminent gentlemen on both sides to save their faces".<sup>1</sup>

Oliver himself was indefatigable in pursuit of such a compromise, persuading Austen Chamberlain and Carson to accept all-round devolution should it be put forward by the Liberals; amongst the latter, however, he was only able to muster the support of Lord Charnwood, Murray Macdonald and Munro Ferguson.<sup>2</sup> Curtis and Grigg achieved a more notable success, influencing Churchill towards a federal solution, first in September 1912, and then again (with Brand) in the spring of 1914. On the latter occasion the Round Tablers drew up a scheme for amending the Home Rule Bill which was broadly accepted by Chamberlain, Carson and Bonar Law as well as Churchill. Nevertheless, as soon as Asquith was brought in, negotiations broke down. Churchill then reverted to his previous, pugnacious intransigence.<sup>3</sup>

With the exception of Oliver, the Round Tablers' advocacy of "Home Rule All Round" was sporadic and half-hearted. To all intents and purposes

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver (to Craik), 24 Oct 1913, Oliver Papers 95, fols 99-103.

<sup>2</sup> For correspondence with Chamberlain and Carson, see Oliver Papers 91 and 87; of correspondence with Grey and Craik, *ibid* 92 and 95. J A Spender believed that Oliver was too identified with Unionism to have any impact in Liberal circles: Spender to Oliver, 6 March 1914, Oliver Papers 96, fols 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> "Suggestions for a Settlement of the Irish Question", with subsequent marginalia, RT Papers c 823, fols 154-57; Curtis to H Montgomery Hyde, 24 July 1950, Curtis Papers 62, fol 27; Kendle, "The Round Table Movement and 'Home Rule All Round'". Oliver regarded Churchill as "the enemy of your country": Oliver to Curtis, 10 April 1914, Curtis Papers 2, fols 161-62.

they ignored what was in fact the largest element in the problem: the aspirations of Irish Nationalists themselves. "Colonial Autonomy", the demand of the constitutional Nationalists, was ruled out entirely, on the grounds that it was a "transitional stage", which "must inevitably lead either to closer union or to something which will not be distinguishable from separation".<sup>1</sup> Unlike the peoples of the existing Dominions, the Irish could not be trusted to make the choice wisely. Indeed, the Round Tablers recognised that any solution to which they themselves could subscribe would "have to be carried over the heads of the Irish Nationalist party".<sup>2</sup>

The Round Tablers' true political colours were shown most clearly in their attitudes to Ulster. Oliver condemned "all this Ulster shouting and drum-beating and treasonable tomfoolery" in 1911; but that was mainly because it was "premature" and might alienate potential supporters on the mainland.<sup>3</sup> The *Round Table* refused to condemn Ulster's preparations for rebellion. "It is enough that these men believe themselves to be arming to defend their fundamental rights of citizenship in the United Kingdom."<sup>4</sup> Milner and Amery were leading figures in the organisation of an English Covenant: Milner thought that "the crisis . . . calls for action, which is different, not only in degree, but in kind, from what is appropriate to

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<sup>1</sup> [Brand and Craik,] "Home Rule", *RT*, June 1912, pp 428-32.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to J A Spender, 12 Dec 1913, *RT Papers* c 790, fols 114-18.

<sup>3</sup> Oliver to Robinson, 27 Sept 1911, *Oliver Papers* 84, fols 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> [Grigg,] "The Irish Crisis", *RT*, March 1914, p 219. Grigg did worry, however, about the example which might be set to "other discontented elements of society, not only in the United Kingdom, but in our dependencies beyond the seas": *ibid*, p 213.

ordinary political controversies".<sup>1</sup> Curtis came "to the conclusion that apart from any obligations I may have to the Round Table, I ought to sign"; Grigg thought that he and Curtis should sign, whatever the propriety of Round Table employees doing so.<sup>2</sup>

In September 1914 the *Round Table* recorded that it was "only by the narrowest margin that we are not now engaged in a civil as well as a foreign war".<sup>3</sup> Had it come to such a point, many of the Round Tablers might well have been on the side of the rebels.

### The Rivalry of Empires

"Great Empires are welded together by pressure from without", Brand observed in 1909.<sup>4</sup> The connection between external pressure and internal consolidation was fundamental to the Round Table's arguments in the period 1910-14, to the extent that it is difficult to disentangle the relative weight attached to each. Was Imperial federation urged primarily as a response to international rivals, or was external pressure seized upon as a convenient pretext? The motives behind the Round Table movement were complex, and a matter of some debate within the Koot. Nevertheless, it is

<sup>1</sup> Milner to Selborne, 18 Feb 1914, Milner Papers 689, fols 16-18.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Grigg, 16 March 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 12-13; Grigg to Curtis, 17 March 1914, *ibid.*, fol 14. Further correspondence in RT Papers c 823, fols 118 ff.

<sup>3</sup> [V Allison Phillips et al,] "United Kingdom", RT, Sept 1914, p 712.

<sup>4</sup> Brand, *The Union of South Africa* (Oxford, 1909), p 131.

clear that the existence of external threats added enormously to the persuasiveness and relevance of the Round Tablers' arguments, and to their cohesion as a group.

The early Round Tablers were in no doubt as to the source of the main threat to Britain and her Empire. Anglo-German antagonism, Kerr declared in the first *Round Table*, was "an all-pervading reality" and "the central fact in the international situation to-day".<sup>1</sup> Kerr interpreted this antagonism primarily in ideological terms, as a clash between the British principles of "individualism" and "liberty" and the Prussian principles of "national efficiency" and "autocracy". The root of the problem was "the unalterable conviction, deep in the hearts of the [German] people, that it is their destiny to become the first power of the world". Only a change of heart in Germany could avert the catastrophe of a full-scale war.<sup>2</sup> A similar line was taken by Dawson's *Times*, and was indeed accepted by the Koot as a whole.

The Round Tablers, as they later realised,<sup>3</sup> are open to the charge that they contributed to the outbreak of war by dwelling on the irreconcilability of British and German aspirations. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the Round Tablers took an active rôle in lobbying British politicians on this issue. There was little need, and there were plenty of other groups to do so. In Britain, at least, the Round Table's rôle in disseminating anti-Germanism was minor, consisting mainly of accepting and therefore reinforcing attitudes already well-formed.

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "Anglo-German Rivalry", *RT*, Nov 1910 (pp 7-40), p 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp 23, 37 and *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "The Foundations of Peace", *RT*, June 1915, pp 597-8.

It was not with attitudes in Britain, but with attitudes in the Dominions, that the Round Tablers were primarily concerned. Their initial soundings in the Dominions, and the reactions to Curtis's *Studies*, revealed that there was by no means a universal acceptance of the idea that a threat to Britain was a threat to the Dominions themselves. Anglo-German antagonism therefore entailed a possibility of divergence between Britain and the Dominions. Describing the origins of the Round Table, Curtis later emphasised that its founders "feared that South Africans might abstain from a future war with Germany on the grounds that they had not participated in the decision to make war".<sup>1</sup> "Colonial Neutrality" was thought to be a real possibility, especially after Laurier's assertion of Dominion rights at the 1911 Conference. It was a possibility which the Round Tablers were obviously keen to avert, and considerable space was therefore devoted to demonstrating its impracticability through the pages of the *Round Table* magazine. Neutrality, in the *Round Table's* view, was equivalent to secession, and, while Britain was unlikely to enforce unity by coercion, the Dominions would soon find that independence would "save neither their honour nor their territories". The advocates of neutrality were transparently "hoping to be able to combine the advantages of membership of the British Empire, with avoidance of its risks and obligations".<sup>2</sup>

The *Round Table's* coverage of Anglo-German relations attempted to deal with the problem from another angle, by emphasising the identity of

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, *Dyarchy* (London, 1920), p 41; cf [Curtis,] "Abe Bailey", *RT*, Sept 1940, pp 743-46.

<sup>2</sup> "Colonial Neutrality", *RT*, Aug 1911, pp 435-42; cf [Kerr,] "The New Problem of Imperial Defence", *RT*, May 1911, pp 231-62.



British and Dominion interests. Kerr's 1910 article stressed the global rather than European range of Germany's ambitions, the existence of a "surplus" population in Germany, and the probability that the Dominions (encompassing much of the land "fit for white settlement") would fall prey to Germany should she prove successful in the struggle for naval supremacy. Kerr also stressed that

"Of all things [Germany] . . . fears the effective union of the British Empire for defence. In the long run it is mathematically just as certain that she will defeat England alone in a contest of wealth and numbers, as it is that she will be beaten by the combined peoples of the Empire".<sup>1</sup>

Kerr's initial analysis of the German threat thus tied in neatly with the Round Table's wider aim of Imperial integration. The picture he drew of German ambitions was sharp and uncompromising - perhaps too much so to be entirely convincing amongst Dominion readers. A visit to Berlin at the height of the Moroccan crisis also helped to modify Kerr's views. As he wrote to his mother, his conversations there convinced him "that the price of war is so terrific that only the most vital of national interests can justify it".<sup>2</sup> Writing in the *Round Table* after his return, Kerr retracted his earlier claim that Germany's interests compelled her to deprive Britain of her Dominions and colonies, and suggested, on the contrary, that British and German interests in the extra-European world generally coincided. In Kerr's revised analysis, Germany's true interests were not those perceived by her government; her autocracy, aristocracy and bureaucracy needed an

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "Anglo-German Rivalry", *loc cit*, pp 21-25.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 20 Oct 1911, Lothian Papers 461, fol 10.

external threat to cling to power; previous successes had "turned their heads"; and "the more unpopular [the German government] grows at home the stronger is the bias in favour of recovering its prestige . . . by glory abroad". By standing firm, the British Empire was defending not only its own interests, but international right, and the real interests of the German people themselves.'

Kerr thus went some way towards accommodating the possibility of a reconciliation between Britain and Germany, provided that the German ruling class abandoned its irrational and illegitimate ambitions. A more active policy of appeasement was urged by Eggleston, in a memorandum which was published, with modifications and an editorial disclaimer, in the *Round Table* of September 1912. Eggleston emphasised that Germany's ambitions were on the whole "legitimate not predatory" and he suggested that Germany might make a useful partner in "the white man's mission of civilization". Britain's entente with France and Russia he described as both provocative and foolish; much better would be to work for a re-establishment of the old Concert of Powers. As an interim measure, Britain should withdraw from the Entente, and strengthen her own position with a "healthy dose" of tariff and land reform, and of Imperial and military "Organization". (Curiously, Eggleston's original memorandum envisaged this as a possible "Liberal [party] policy".)<sup>2</sup>

Eggleston's suggestions reflected an alternative view of the dangers

<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "Britain, France and Germany", *FT*, Dec 1911, pp 1-57.

<sup>2</sup> Eggleston, "England and Germany: A Liberal Policy Towards Germany", [sent 18 April 1912,] RT Papers c 777, fols 73-83; [idem] "An Australian Note on Anglo-German Relations", *RT* Sept, 1912, pp 717-36.

confronting the British Empire as well as a more sympathetic approach to German ambitions. In his view, a Germany "dispersed through the world with interests in every land . . . . would be an ally of Great Britain in the coming struggle with Eastern nations".<sup>1</sup> Eggleston and a number of other Australian Round Tablers saw Japan as the greatest threat to the Empire.

At first, the Moot was inclined to play upon such fears, as a useful argument for Imperial consolidation.<sup>2</sup> To the extent that Dominion attitudes came into conflict with British strategy, however, the Moot chose to support the calculations of British officialdom. This was shown most clearly by an article for the June 1914 *Round Table*, in which Grigg summarised two articles sent from Australia by Eggleston and W J Isbister, only to discount the fears they voiced as "beyond all reasonable reckoning". For Grigg, the "mutual value of [the British Empire's] . . . friendship with the awakened people of Japan" was demonstrable, and he once again (with an allusion to Mahan's doctrine of concentration) affirmed that the front line of Australia's defence was in the North Sea.<sup>3</sup>

The Moot's handling of Australian criticism of British foreign policy is significant. As in the parallel case of Anglo-German antagonism, the Moot was strongly supportive of official British policy. Where Dominion opinion was out of step with British policy, the Moot saw its rôle, at this stage, not as a conduit for Dominion influence, but as a means of "educating" the Dominions towards acceptance of British views.

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<sup>1</sup> Eggleston, "England and Germany", *loc cit.* fol 79.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance", *RT*, Feb 1911, pp 105-53.

<sup>3</sup> [Grigg,] "Naval Policy and the Pacific Question", *RT*, June 1914, pp 391-463. The Moot's attitude may have been confirmed, if not influenced, by Chirol, who was a particularly strong supporter of the Alliance: see his lecture to the Raleigh Club, "The Far East" (delivered 7 June 1914), *RT Papers* c 804, fols 38-65.

## 5. PROBLEMS OF WAR AND ADJUSTMENT. 1914-22

The outbreak of war inevitably wrought havoc on the Round Table organisation, although it did not "go bust", as Kerr initially predicted.<sup>1</sup> The London group was depleted by the enlistment of Amery, Craik and Grigg. Kerr at first thought of enlisting, but was persuaded otherwise by Curtis and Selborne. He was, in fact, called up for service in March 1916, and his first application for exemption was turned down - "apparently none of the tribunal had ever heard of the Round Table" - but the influence of his friends eventually prevailed.<sup>2</sup> Equally important in circumscribing Round Table operations was the drying-up of donations to the movement. The result was the enforced redundancy of three office staff and calls for economies in the printing of Curtis's studies.<sup>3</sup>

Round Table operations in the Dominions were likewise severely curtailed by the war. The London group lost two of its staunchest allies, the Canadian E J Kylie and the New Zealander S A Atkinson, and all the Dominion groups were greatly diminished by enlistment. Those who remained complained of the difficulties of recruiting new members, and of the

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 29 July 1914, Lothian Papers 464, fol 26.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 31 March 1916, Lothian Papers 465, fol 27. The appeal tribunal was chaired by Lord Salisbury.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 12 Aug 1914, RT Papers c 782, fols 187-88.

general lack of interest in the Round Table's "academic" programme.<sup>1</sup>

However, the war did not result in any change of tack by the Round Table group, which decided in October 1914 to continue with its original plan. Indeed, the *Round Table* magazine was thought all the more useful as a vehicle for the views on war policy espoused by the Moot,<sup>2</sup> which agreed that it "must now concentrate practically its whole attention on the business of winning the war".<sup>3</sup>

#### War Politics and the Lloyd George Coalition

The most remarkable result of the First World War for the Moot was the way in which, individually and collectively, Round Tablers moved from a position on the margins of British political life to one very much nearer its centre.

Conscription, for which Milner, Oliver, Amery and others had pressed before the war, and which Curtis hinted at in his *Round Table Studies*, now occupied a central place in the group's desiderata. An article on the subject was prepared for the December 1914 *Round Table*, which included the contention that military service was a Common Law duty; in the event, the

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<sup>1</sup> See, eg Glazebrook to Curtis, 27 Aug 1914, RT Papers c 782, fols 195-6.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Glazebrook, 3 Nov 1914, RT Papers c 779, fol 127.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr] to Curtis, 4 June 1915, RT Papers c 809, fols 46-47.



death of Lord Roberts provided a different angle from which to tackle the subject.<sup>1</sup>

The following year, 1915, saw a large number of references to the issue in the pages of the magazine, and the publication of Oliver's *Ordeal by Battle*, a trenchant statement of the case for compulsion. At one point a "National Covenant" was proposed, by which people would pledge themselves to "subordinate their whole lives during the war to carrying out the declared purpose of the Government to bring this war to a successful issue".<sup>2</sup> Although this project was ruled out on the appearance of Northcliffe's National Service Society,<sup>3</sup> the London group continued to press for the "organising and disciplining of the whole population".<sup>4</sup> Once conscription was enacted, London Round Tablers called for harsh penalties against conscientious objectors, Kerr going so far as to suggest exile (following a period of imprisonment with hard labour) as a suitable punishment.<sup>5</sup> In the Dominions (which the *Round Table* declared to be a "second reservoir"<sup>6</sup>) Round Tablers were again prominent in the ultimately unsuccessful campaigns for the local introduction of conscription.

<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "Draft Article on Compulsory Service", Nov 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 137-49; [Amery,] "Lord Roberts", RT, Dec 1914, pp 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Lady Selborne, 10 Aug 1915, Curtis Papers 2, fols 180-84.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Evelyn Wrench, 3 Sept 1915, RT Papers c 845, fol 18.

<sup>4</sup> [Kerr,] "National Duty in War", RT, Sept 1915, p 709.

<sup>5</sup> Kerr, "Memorandum on the 'Absolutist' Conscientious Objectors", [1917/18,] Lothian Papers 219, fols 744-48.

<sup>6</sup> [Kerr,] "The Burden of Victory", RT, June 1915, pp 516-17.

The Moot's views on conscription and on the need for a more vigorous war policy pitted it against the dilatory "Squiff" (Asquith, with whom the Moot had quarrelled before, over Anglo-Dominion relations, Ireland, and a whole range of other issues). The latter's incompetence as a war leader and loosening grip on his own party enabled Milner and his colleagues to ally themselves with powerful political forces in both major parties and in the War Office. Their "war gingerite" credentials, patriotic rectitude and experience in administration ensured that the Round Tablers were well placed to share in the spoils following Asquith's fall.

Much has been written about the "Monday night cabal" of Milner and his followers, and its rôle in Asquith's downfall.<sup>1</sup> A forerunner of this group was the Round Table weekly subcommittee set up in June 1915 to discuss war policy, consisting of Milner, Oliver, Amery, Hitchens, Brand, Kerr, Zimmern and Chirol.<sup>2</sup> In January 1916, Dawson recorded the first meeting of the "Monday night" group, consisting of himself, Milner, Oliver, Amery and Sir Edward Carson.<sup>3</sup> Others who joined included Kerr, Waldorf Astor, General Sir Henry Wilson and (occasionally) Lloyd George. Although the group was separate from the Round Table, Round Tablers were numerically preponderant, and contemporaries often confused membership of the two.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A locus classicus of the conspiratorialist view is Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and our Times* (London, 1955), chapter 12.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr] to Curtis, 4 June 1915, RT Papers c 809, fols 46-47.

<sup>3</sup> Dawson's diary, 17 Jan 1916, Dawson Papers 22.

<sup>4</sup> See, eg, Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets, Vol I* (London, 1970), pp 422-23 (Hankey's diary for 15 Aug 1917).

The purpose of the "Monday night" group was to discuss and co-ordinate demands for a more effective organisation of the war effort. It also promoted the talents of its own members, particularly Milner. In June 1916 Oliver suggested "various means . . . for forcing Milner on the reluctant Government", including Conservative party pressure, press "clamour", and "private Tadpoling" (the method he preferred).<sup>1</sup>

A meeting of the "Monday night" group on 27 November 1916, including Carson and Wilson, agreed to put pressure on Lloyd George and Bonar Law to pull out of Asquith's cabinet.<sup>2</sup> This was confirmed by a Round Table meeting the following weekend, during and after which Dawson composed his famous editorial of 4 December, which scotched Asquith's hopes of containing the cabinet revolt.<sup>3</sup> The following day the government collapsed, to be replaced by a new Coalition under Lloyd George. The rôle of the "Monday night" and Round Table groups was relatively minor, but it was timely, and helped to put a principled gloss on the intrigues of politicians.<sup>4</sup>

Milner himself became a member of the new five-man War Cabinet. In 1918 he was briefly Secretary of State for War, responsible for the unified

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver to Carson, 9 June 1916, Oliver Papers 87, fols 9-12.

<sup>2</sup> Dawson's diary, 27 Nov 1916, Dawson Papers 22.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 4 Dec 1916.

<sup>4</sup> See P A Lockwood, "Milner's Entry into the War Cabinet", *Hist Journal*, Vol VII (1964), pp 120-34, and Cameron Hazlehurst, "The Conspiracy Myth" in M Gilbert (ed), *Lloyd George* (New Jersey, 1968).

war command at Douellens which staved off the Allied collapse, and from 1918-21 he served as Colonial Secretary, notable mainly for his advocacy of measured retreat in Egypt.

Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet Secretary, managed to forestall Milner's attempt to foist Steel-Maitland on him as an assistant. He was forced to accept Amery, however, "as Milner insists", even though he "would much sooner see him elsewhere".<sup>1</sup> Amery found that Hankey's rule of minuting definite conclusions was "not easy after some particularly woolly discussion. But my experience was that, if one invented the best decision one could think of, it was rarely queried by those concerned".<sup>2</sup>

Kerr was appointed a member of Lloyd George's "Garden Suburb" in January 1917 (and was replaced as *Round Table* editor by Coupland, although he continued to contribute a large number of articles). By the end of the war, Kerr was Lloyd George's only private secretary, in which position he remained until 1921, when he was replaced by Grigg. Milner predicted that Kerr would have "a great chance of making himself heard" from his position in Downing Street.<sup>3</sup> Kerr was indeed regarded in many quarters as the "power behind the throne".<sup>4</sup> It was his job not only to brief the Prime Minister, controlling the flow of information and often conducting

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets, Vol I* (London, 1970), pp 343-4.

<sup>2</sup> Amery, *My Political Life, Vol 2* (London, 1953), p 94.

<sup>3</sup> Milner to Sir Hugh Thornton, 3 Feb 1917, Milner Papers 19, fols 7-12.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Times*, 24 March 1921.

interviews on his behalf, but also to liaise with government departments, and even occasionally to act as Lloyd George's representative at government meetings. Kerr's influence was increased by Lloyd George's tendency to "shuffle everything on to" Kerr, and his reluctance "to use the constitutional machinery".<sup>1</sup>

Others in the Moot moved into positions of less influence, but still of importance. Oliver served briefly as secretary to the Economic Offensive committee of the cabinet. Brand and Hichens were enlisted to set up the Imperial Munitions Board in Canada, which was subsequently chaired and staffed by members of the Canadian Round Table. Brand went on to Washington, where he was deputy chairman of the British Mission. Coupland and Zimmern both served in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, which acted as a "brains trust" for the development of British war aims.

John Turner has argued persuasively that the movement of Milner's protégés into positions of office and influence was less the result of a concerted "Fabian-like Milnerite penetration" than of "opportunistic lobbying".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the prestige and power of the group as a whole was enhanced significantly by the changes which brought some of its members so close to the centre of power in Britain.

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<sup>1</sup> Hankey to Kerr, 11 Sept 1920, Lothian Papers 210, fols 407-11; cf Alan Sharp, "The Foreign Office in Eclipse, 1919-22", *History*, Vol 61 (1976), pp 198-218.

<sup>2</sup> J A Turner, "The Formation of Lloyd George's 'Garden Suburb'", *Hist Journal*, vol 20 (1977), pp 165-84.



The position of Milner, Amery and particularly Kerr enabled those Round Tablers who were still independent of the government to enjoy a privileged access to the corridors of power. Moreover, this was at a time "when", as Curtis wrote, "everything is plastic and when by a touch you can direct policy in one direction or the other".<sup>1</sup> Curtis himself sought to exert an influence through Kerr and then Grigg on at least three issues - immigration policies, India and Ireland.

Nevertheless, the activities and influence of the Round Table were clearly constrained by the needs of the day-to-day running of the war and its aftermath, and also by the political priorities of the Coalition's supporters. The Moot could not set the agenda; it could only hope to exert influence on each issue as it arose. Furthermore, as Curtis realised, the Round Table's intimacy with the Government was double-edged.

"To do our work we must like *The Times* be in close touch with men in office. But if once you allow the *Round Table* to become an official organ its power for good will die in your hands. Now that so many of our colleagues are in official positions we run some danger of our fundamental principles suffering . . . eclipse."<sup>2</sup>

The close connections between the Round Table and the Lloyd George Coalition necessarily entailed some loss of its claim to disinterestedness. In Kerr's case, the effect of his years in Downing Street was dramatic, causing him to transfer his allegiance wholeheartedly to Lloyd George.

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Kerr, 25 March 1917, Lothian Papers 33, fols 8-10.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Coupland, 15 Oct 1917, RT Papers c 810, fols 191-94.

allegations that the younger Round Tablers had become mere mouthpieces for Lloyd George were, indeed, both to damage relations with the Dominion Round Table groups, and to give rise to acrimonious disputes within the London Mob.

### The Dominions in Wartime

The Dominions' response to the outbreak of war appeared, at first, to confound those who believed the Anglo-Dominion relationship to be in process of slow disintegration. As Duncan commented, the war "brought to the test . . . theories of neutrality and partnership-at-will".<sup>1</sup> And the Dominions' answer was unequivocal. A million men from the Dominions enlisted to fight for the Empire, in theatres ranging from the Western Front through the Dardanelles to the various German colonies in Africa and the Pacific.<sup>2</sup> "Surely in all history there has been no such striking demonstration of the unity of a far-flung Empire", asserted the Canadian Round Table.<sup>3</sup>

The mobilisation of Dominion resources on such a scale, and on a purely voluntary basis, appeared to many commentators also to prove that co-operation afforded a workable basis for the future of the Empire. This

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<sup>1</sup> [Duncan,] "South Africa", *RT*, Dec 1914, p 229.

<sup>2</sup> See "The Military Effort of the British Empire", *RT*, June 1919, pp 495-509 for an early attempt to quantify the Imperial war effort..

<sup>3</sup> "Canada", *RT*, Dec 1914 (pp 179-200), p 186.

view, which had always been an element in the thinking of some Round Tablers, steadily gained ground as the war progressed. By 1916 key figures in the London Moot, including Brand and Milner, were prepared to subscribe to such a view.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Curtis remained unconvinced. At first, Kerr shared Curtis's doubts.<sup>2</sup> So, too, did Kylie, who emphasised that "what really counts is the intelligent and combined effort which if made in time of peace will prevent war".<sup>3</sup>

While the tensions between federation and co-operation thus remained unresolved, the Moot was unanimous in believing that some constitutional change was both necessary and inevitable either during or immediately after the war. Even if co-operation represented a viable future strategem for Anglo-Dominion relations, the ramshackle, chaotic and unstructured form in which it existed before 1914 did not. On this point the Moot was encouraged by some of the reports sent by Dominion Round Tablers. New Zealand's first *Round Table* contribution of the war included a plea for "a better organized Imperial system".<sup>4</sup> The following year, the Australian *Round Table* acknowledged "the defective system under which the Empire's affairs are conducted", as a result of which "the desire and the capacity

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<sup>1</sup> See Milner to Glazebrook, 8 March 1916, Milner Papers 44, fols 61-64; Brand to Sir Edmund Walker, 22 Feb 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 32-3. See also above, pp 98-99.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr, "The Meaning and Purpose of the British Commonwealth" [1916], Lothian Papers 4, item 278; [Kerr,] "The Schism of Europe", RT, March 1915 (pp 345-411), pp 409-10.

<sup>3</sup> Kylie to Curtis, 30 Sept 1914, RT Papers c 779, fols 80-81.

<sup>4</sup> "New Zealand", RT, Dec 1914, p 257.

[in the Dominions] to serve are not availed of to the full".<sup>1</sup>

To the London Round Table, it was still clear that if the Dominions were to share in the permanent control of the Empire's foreign policy, "a new government must be created to deal with it, constitutionally representative of all the democracies under the Crown". Nevertheless, such a radical change in the Imperial constitution was unlikely to be brought about in the conditions of war. "It will be time enough to overhaul it when the strain is relaxed and peace is attained."<sup>2</sup> The important point for the moment was that the "absence of adequate representative machinery" could be "no excuse" for not using "the machinery of consultation which already exists".<sup>3</sup>

The Round Table therefore urged the British Government to convene a wartime Imperial Conference. Cable and post were entirely inadequate as a means of consultation. A whole range of questions - such as manpower, finance, trade restrictions, shipping and prize law - needed to be hammered out. More importantly still, it was essential for the Dominions "to know, well in advance, the mind of the British Government" regarding peace terms. The latter would "commit the Dominions as completely as Great Britain". A wartime Conference would therefore have a full agenda even without discussing "any of the larger problems of Imperial partnership".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Australia", *RT*, Sept 1915, p 865.

<sup>2</sup> [Grigg,] "The Dominions and the Settlement: A Plea for Conference", *RT*, March 1915, pp 325-44.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "National Duty in War", *RT*, Sept 1915 (pp 707-23), p 720.

<sup>4</sup> [Grigg,] "The Dominions and the Settlement . . .", *loc cit.*

The Dominion *Round Table* articles responded to the Koot's plea for a Conference, but not in such a way as to give great cheer. From Australia it was reported that "responsible opinion appears cautious . . . and anxious to wait awhile". There was even a possibility of "embarrassment" and "danger" if agreement on peace aims could not be reached.<sup>1</sup> In New Zealand, "scant consideration" had been given to the possibility of a Conference. The war had brought about "a wider, more discriminating, and more instructed loyalty to the great Commonwealth", but also a "feeling that the war has altered for all time the position of the Dominions".<sup>2</sup>

The London Round Tablers still believed that Dominion nationalism could be accommodated and even co-opted by a movement for closer Imperial integration. Nevertheless, the difficulties of doing so were brought home forcefully, first by the disagreements (particularly between Curtis and the Canadian Round Tablers) over publication of *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, and secondly by the public and press response to Curtis's book. Even if the Round Tablers themselves did not see Imperialism and nationalism as necessarily antagonistic, many of their critics did. The *Toronto Globe*, for instance, suggested that in

"appealing at this time to the perfervid loyalty of ultra-Imperialists, and in opposing Imperialism to Nationality, [the Round Tablers] . . . are awakening latent forces in this and every Dominion which prudent statesmanship would refrain from antagonizing at this critical juncture".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Australia", *RT*, June 1915, pp 670-91.

<sup>2</sup> "New Zealand", *RT*, Sept 1915, pp 887-902.

<sup>3</sup> *Toronto Globe*, 30 April 1917, copy in *RT Papers* c 822, fol 89.



This was a caricature of the Round Table's position, but it was one which illustrated clearly the suspicion with which many Dominion nationalists now viewed proposals for Imperial reform.

Matters came to a head at the Imperial War Conference of March to May 1917. At a private dinner with the Round Table, Borden emphasised that the creation of an Imperial Parliament was for the moment "wholly impossible and that it was dangerous to urge it"; on the other hand, he asserted that the new "Imperial Cabinet" set a valuable precedent, which "accorded with the principle of responsible government because all its members were responsible to their several parliaments and electorates for its decisions". (Curtis, who was in India, would have shuddered.) Two days later Smuts likened the new body to a board of directors who would meet occasionally to decide the general lines of policy, leaving Great Britain to be "the managing director on the spot". On this occasion Brand and Kerr broke ranks with their more dogmatic colleagues, "and the discussion broke up".<sup>1</sup>

Kerr's article for the *Round Table* gave no hint of the disagreements within the Moot; indeed, it was a perfect example of his skill in skating over thin ice. Kerr welcomed the new Imperial Cabinet - which, by its own resolutions, promised to be annual - as a "valuable advance", providing

"a simple yet elastic machinery . . . which will enable all the Governments of the Empire to keep in constant, if not continuous, consultation on every aspect of Imperial policy, and which will enable all its peoples to understand far better their common problems".

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of discussion, 2 Mar 1917 (Borden) and 4 May 1917 (Smuts), Lothian Papers 474, items 3 and 4. See also above, pp 108-110.

On the other hand, even if the "Cabinet" were complemented by a Conference representative of all the Parliaments of the Empire, there was "no use pretending" that the changes involved "will in themselves solve the fundamental Imperial problem".

"The improved system for conducting Imperial affairs . . . cannot give the Dominions more than a consultative voice in Imperial and foreign policy . . . [It] will greatly increase the influence of the Overseas nations in foreign policy . . . But it will in the last resort still be the British Parliament which will decide."

The new system "might be made to work for many years", but eventually "it will . . . fail".<sup>1</sup>

Kerr's re-iteration of the arguments against co-operation was dictated as much by the need to hold the Moot together as by any real hopes of inducing a change of heart amongst the statesmen and peoples of Britain and the Dominions. Too much uncertainty still attached to the outcome of the war for questions of constitutional nicety to have more than a marginal interest. Moreover, as Kerr himself realised, the mood of the Dominions was such that the proponents of Imperial integration had been thrown on the defensive. The war had simultaneously increased "the sense of national self-reliance" in the Dominions and "greatly diminished the prestige of the British Government", with the result that the Dominions were "tending more and more to conceive of the Empire as five nations deliberating on equal terms round a table". In the longer term, this could only help the Round

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The New Developments in the Constitution of the Empire", RT, June 1917, pp 441-59. Butler does not include this in his list of Kerr's articles, but see eg Coupland to Curtis, 22 May 1917, RT Papers c 810, fols 66-67.

Table cause; but in the short term, it would render any federalist campaign pointless or even counter-productive.<sup>1</sup>

The Round Table had long insisted that the negotiation of peace would test co-operation as severely as the conduct of war. Curtis, in *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, had gone as far as to assert that the Dominions' "representatives will not be admitted to the conference at which . . . peace is finally made".<sup>2</sup> Less categorically, Grigg suggested that plenipotentiaries "cannot be responsible to several different governments", but allowed that the Dominions would at least be able to send advisers.<sup>3</sup> When peace finally came, the Dominions' uncertain constitutional position was reflected in an ambiguous representation, partly independent and partly within the British Empire delegation. Curiously, this was an aspect of the Conference on which the Round Table chose not to comment.

#### War Aims

A "Special War Number" of the *Round Table*, published in September 1914, examined the causes of the war. R W Seton-Watson emphasised the rôle of the Magyar ascendancy, alleging complicity in the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. Nevertheless, the "dynamic cause" of the war was found to lie in German militarism, aiming, desperately, at "world-domination or downfall", and seeing in Britain its "real enemy". Articles by Kerr and Grigg set the tone for future *Round Table* contributions by

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 21 July 1917, Lothian Papers 33, fols 19-21.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London, 1916), p 113.

<sup>3</sup> [Grigg,] "The Dominions and the Settlement", *RT*, March 1915, pp 335-36.

describing the utter irreconcilability of the British Empire (which "stands for . . . peace, unity and freedom") with "Prussianism" ("a drilled and disciplined national monomania").<sup>1</sup> This was "a heroic conflict of ideals", a world-historical struggle between the forces of freedom and those of despotism.<sup>2</sup>

The logical inconsistencies of this view, especially given the participation of Russia on the Allies' side, were blithely ignored.<sup>3</sup> The propagandist effect was both conscious and deliberate. A special letter accompanying the September 1914 issue told its recipients that any "notice that you can give to this statement of the British case will be warmly appreciated".<sup>4</sup> Several *Round Table* articles were reprinted for sale at 3d or 6d, and the Foreign Office produced further copies for distribution in the United States and other neutral countries.<sup>5</sup>

The *Round Table's* interpretation of the war's origins made clear the Moot's belief that Prussian militarism was the most fundamental cause of the war. Accordingly, the utter defeat of Germany, and the dismemberment of its ruling élite, occupied first place amongst the Moot's suggested war aims. The real danger was thought to be of "a truce-like peace and a new

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<sup>1</sup> [Seton-Watson,] "The Austro-Servian Dispute", *RT*, Sept 1914, pp 659-76; [Kerr,] "The War in Europe", *ibid*, pp 591-615 (p 613 for "peace, unity and freedom"); [Grigg,] "Germany and the Prussian Spirit", *ibid*, pp 616-58 (p 644 for "national monomania").

<sup>2</sup> [Grigg,] "Germany and the Prussian Spirit", p 617.

<sup>3</sup> [J D Wilson,] "Russia and Her Ideals", *RT*, Dec 1914, pp 103-35, made out a rather weak case for Russia's "democratic spirit".

<sup>4</sup> [Letter to *RT* subscribers,] 17 Sept 1914, *RT Papers* c 845, fol 5.

<sup>5</sup> "Round Table War Pamphlets", *RT Papers* c 850, fol 217; Kerr, "Memorandum", [1919,] *Brand Papers*, box 42.

war".<sup>1</sup> Lansdowne, the most prominent advocate of compromise, was described by Coupland as "a typical product of the old régime".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Round Table was careful to dissociate itself from those who urged the imposition of a "vindictive" peace.

"A peace which gave any ground for the belief that the aim of the Allies was the destruction of the unity of the German people, or the restriction of their legitimate liberty or their opportunity to develop on peaceful lines, would only . . . render inevitable another war."<sup>3</sup>

The Round Table's analysis of the Austro-Hungarian rôle in precipitating war indicated a second element of the war aims advocated by the group. This was that "the map of Europe must be redrawn" to accommodate the aspirations of subject nations.<sup>4</sup> The principle of "national self-determination" was particularly keenly adhered to by Coupland and Zimmern; and also by R V Seton-Watson, Arnold Toynbee and Lewis Namier, all of whom contributed articles to the *Round Table*, joined Zimmern in launching *New Europe* in 1916 and, again with Zimmern, staffed the Foreign Office's Political Intelligence Department from 1917.<sup>5</sup>

Within the wider Moot, the full application of the principle caused some misgivings. Grigg, in an article of December 1914, took issue with

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Burden of Victory", *RT*, June 1915 (pp 511-20), p 518.

<sup>2</sup> Coupland to V Massey, 27 Aug 1918, RT Papers c 822, fols 137-38. Lansdowne's letter was rejected by Dawson's *Times*.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "The Foundations of Peace", *RT*, June 1915 (pp 589-625), pp 613-14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> For the PID, see Erik Goldstein, *Winning the Peace: British Diplomatic Strategy, Peace Planning, and the Paris Peace Conference, 1916-20* (Oxford, 1991), esp ch 2.



the liberal "sentiment in favour of small States per se".<sup>1</sup> Although Kerr endorsed the principle of self-determination, he also argued that self-determination could only be regarded as progressive if it were a first step towards some wider federation.<sup>2</sup> Coupland complained that Kerr was averse to "true" nationalism, as expounded by Zimmern and his allies.<sup>3</sup> It was not the arguments of the latter which finally resolved the question, but the actual disintegration of the central Empires.

A third element of the Round Table's war aims was provided by the global nature of the war: the disposition of Germany's colonies and of Turkey's Arab territories. South Africa and the Pacific Dominions had a clear interest in the retention of the colonies which they had overrun. Equally, Britain stood to gain from a large increment in her Imperial "responsibilities". Nevertheless, the problem of formulating an appropriate justification for a policy of annexation was difficult. Lloyd George's declaration that "the wishes, the desires and the interests of the people" concerned should be the overriding factor was criticised by Feetham as at best indeterminate and at worst contrary to British interests.<sup>4</sup> Yet, as Kerr realised, the argument from British interests was even more

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1 [Grigg,] "Nationalism and Liberty", *RT*, Dec 1914 (pp 18-69), p 55 and passim.

2 See, eg. [Kerr,] "The Harvest of the War", *RT*, Dec 1915 (pp 1-32), pp 14-15.

3 Coupland to Zimmern, 18 Nov [1916], *RT Papers* c 817, fols 214-19.

4 Feetham, "Memorandum" [on German East Africa], 2 Oct 1917, *Lothian Papers* 475, item 1. Feetham suggested "no abandonment of our friends in the struggle" as a more pliable formula. Lloyd George's proposal was contained in his speech at Glasgow, 29 June 1917.

open to objection.<sup>1</sup> The question was therefore left only half-solved, to be taken up again in closer proximity to the peace conference.

The last element in the Round Table's war aims related to the future framework of international relations. Kerr's wartime *Round Table* articles lost few opportunities of reminding his readers that "world peace" was only possible through "world government". For the moment, however, conflicts could only be contained by the determination of the "most liberal Powers" to uphold "justice and liberty . . . if need be by force of arms". Kerr therefore urged the "development of the machinery of international co-operation" by means of "regular meetings of an informal council of the nations".<sup>2</sup>

Kerr's proposal bore superficial similarities to the "League of Nations" idea currently being formulated by Lord Robert Cecil.<sup>3</sup> However, Kerr's views were vaguer and more limited. Whereas Cecil envisaged a scheme of universal disarmament and arbitration backed up by economic sanctions, Kerr opposed automatic commitments and advocated a purely consultative and political body: a revived "Concert of Nations", limited to "the great powers" and (initially at least) to those which fought on the side of the Entente.<sup>4</sup> Calls for a negotiated peace on the basis of a League of Nations he regarded as "the most insidious form of pacifism".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr to Smuts, 14 Dec 1917, Lothian Papers 219, fol 750.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The Foundations of Peace", *RT*, June 1915, pp 616-19; cf [idem,] "The Harvest of the War", *RT*, Dec 1915, pp 16-21.

<sup>3</sup> For Cecil's views, see H P Cecil, "The Development of Lord Robert Cecil's Views on the Securing of a Lasting Peace, 1915-19" (Oxford D Phil, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> [Kerr,] "The Harvest of the War", *loc cit*, pp 19-21.

<sup>5</sup> Kerr to Sir Esme Howard (British Legation, Stockholm), 22 April 1918, Lothian Papers 210, fols 487-90.

Kerr's interpretation of British war aims contained a fair dose of Realpolitik. Nevertheless, the liberal tone of his pronouncements "horrified" Oliver, whose drift away from the Moot can be traced back to wartime disagreements over the presentation of British policy.<sup>1</sup> Lloyd George, on the other hand, recognised the value of a liberal-democratic slant to British propaganda, and John Turner has identified Kerr as an important influence on his war aims speeches of 1917-18, formulated partly in response to labour unrest in Britain, and partly in response to American pressure.<sup>2</sup>

The First World War marked a decisive turning-point by bringing to the fore the hitherto ill-considered question of Anglo-American relations. The desire for some form of rapprochement with the United States had, in varying degrees, formed part of "new imperialist" thinking in the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, before 1914 Milner and the younger Round Tableers appear not to have shown much interest in the question. Kerr's notebooks from his 1909-10 tour reveal an almost exclusive interest in questions of race relations rather than Anglo-American relations. From September 1915, however, articles on America became a regular feature of the magazine. Most early ones were written by the historian G L Beer, who in 1914 wrote to Curtis of his desire for "a closer understanding, and a possible alliance, between our two countries".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver [to Brand?], 26 Dec 1914, Brand Papers, box 2B; Oliver to Kerr, 6 Dec 1915, RT Papers c 780, fols 2-4.

<sup>2</sup> John Turner, *Lloyd George's Secretariat* (Cambridge, 1980), pp 150-51 and *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Beer to Curtis, [late 1914,] RT Papers c 779, fol 83; cf Beer's article on "Milner and British Imperialism", *Political Science Quarterly*, vol xxx (June 1915), pp 301-08.

American belligerence added enormously to the hopes of those who urged a liberal peace and a League of Nations. The *Round Table*, by now broadly aligned with such hopes, worked hard to downplay any divergence between British and American views. Even before America's declaration of war, Coupland professed to find in Wilson's interjections "a final and authoritative confirmation of the unity in hopes and aims of the American and British peoples".<sup>1</sup> A year later, Zimmern wrote of a direct line "from Plato down to President Wilson" in the advocacy of "the principle of the Commonwealth" which also animated the British Empire.<sup>2</sup> Beer agreed that there was a "perfect . . . identity of purpose" between Britain and America.<sup>3</sup>

American belligerence coincided with the first Russian revolution of 1917, an event which the *Round Table* welcomed as a patriotic revolt against the pro-Germanism of the Tsar's entourage.<sup>4</sup> The collapse of the Russian war effort and the rise of Bolshevism confounded such optimistic assessments. Kerr was thrown into a state of near-panic, writing to Curtis in July 1917 that "the world is now rushing headlong towards the abyss of anarchy", the responsibility for averting which "will fall largely upon the shoulders of the people of the British Isles".<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, writing in

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<sup>1</sup> [Coupland,] "The Last Phase", *RT*, March 1917 (pp 195-217), p 206.

<sup>2</sup> [Zimmern,] "Three Doctrines in Conflict", *RT*, March 1918 (pp 262-92), p 286.

<sup>3</sup> [Beer,] "America's War Aims", *RT*, March 1918 (pp 238-61), p 255.

<sup>4</sup> [Coupland,] "A War of Liberation", *RT*, June 1917 (pp 409-41), pp 423-28. Kerr was more pessimistic, realising as early as May 1917 that the Russians were likely to pull out of the war: Kerr to Lloyd George, [May 1917,] *Lothian Papers* 867, item 1.

<sup>5</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 21 July 1917, *Lothian Papers* 33, fols 19-21.

the *Round Table* after the second, Bolshevik revolution, Kerr had recovered his equanimity: "it can only be a question of time before . . . Russia begins to emerge . . . as one of the great liberal Powers of the world".<sup>1</sup> While the Round Tablers expressed a general sympathy with the aims of the "White" counter-revolutionaries, none advocated a more active Western intervention.<sup>2</sup> Even Kerr, despite (or, rather, because of) his tendency to alarmism, believed that

"to start in on a new war against Russia is the surest way of producing Bolshevism at home. Perhaps there will be a call for volunteers, and if so, I've no doubt that there will be lots of officers to volunteer. But let's try and do in Bolshevism peacefully first".<sup>3</sup>

At Versailles Kerr played an important part in frustrating Winston Churchill's attempts to stampede the Conference into authorising a more active intervention in Russia.<sup>4</sup>

#### "Advanced and Backward Peoples"

Before the First World War, the Round Tablers (and Curtis in particular) had been made acutely aware of the need to propagandise the cause of Empire as part of the groundwork for imperial union. During the

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Gathering of the Nations", *RT*, Dec 1917 (pp 1-17), p 3. For attribution (not in Butler), see Coupland to Brand, 22 Nov 1917, *RT Papers* c 846, fols 13-16.

<sup>2</sup> [Zimmern,] "Some Principles and Problems of the Settlement", *RT*, Dec 1918 (pp 88-113), p 91; [Leeper,] "Russia's Revolt against Bolshevism", *RT*, June 1919, pp 509-31.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 18 Feb 1919, *Lothian Papers* 466, fol 17.

<sup>4</sup> Hankey, *The Supreme Control at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (London, 1963), pp 66-73; Martin Gilbert, *Winston S Churchill, Vol IV* (London, 1975), pp 243-55.



war, the new importance attached to an alignment with America and the need to justify annexation of the enemy's former colonies resulted in an even more fervent assertion of the British Imperial mission.

Far from believing Empire to be a thing of the past, Kerr was convinced that such was the "backwardness" of non-Europeans that the European powers (including the Dominions and the United States) would find themselves obliged to intervene more comprehensively in the twentieth than in the nineteenth century.

"Great, indeed, as has been the extension of European rule in the last century, the process does not appear even yet to have ceased. One has only to look around the world to realise that there are many states - Mexico, for instance, Persia, China, Turkey, the Central American republics - whose continued existence as independent sovereign states is in doubt."

While members of the Round Table admitted that individual "cultured types" such as Gokhale or Booker Washington could claim a level of civilization higher than that of the average Englishman<sup>2</sup>, they believed that "colour prejudice", which "is exceptionally strong among the Anglo-Saxon peoples", had a firm basis in facts.<sup>3</sup> Many emphasised climate as a differentiating factor. In the temperate zones were to be found "a more vigorous physique, a higher sense of the value of time, and a greater capacity for sustained and methodical action"; whereas in tropical zones

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr, "Political Relations Between Advanced and Backward Peoples", pp 141-82 of A J Grant et al, *An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London, 1916), p 164. Kerr's choice of title echoed Bryce's Romanes lectures at Oxford in 1902, which provided a liberal justification for segregationism.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr, "Memorandum on the Representation of India" [April 1912], RT Papers c 826, fols 4-14.

<sup>3</sup> [Dove,] "The Colour Question in Politics", Editor's Preface, RT, Dec 1922, p 39.

the climate was "enervating" and nature's abundance was detrimental to the development of mental capacity.<sup>1</sup>

Although in Round Table eyes the most fundamental division was that between Europeans and non-Europeans, it was an axiomatic Round Table belief that the peoples and cultures of the world formed a kind of hierarchy, "a gradual scale varying infinitely from the zenith of civilisation to the nadir of barbarianism".<sup>2</sup>

The Round Table's views on international relations were coloured by a distinction between the peoples of North-West European origin and those of Latin and Slavic descent. Directly below them were deemed to be the peoples of the Middle East and Asia, "who are not uncivilised yet who, for one reason or another, have been unable to maintain a civilised government for themselves, once close contact has been established with the modern world".<sup>3</sup>

Further down the scale, Africans were viewed as a "child-race", completely unaccustomed to organised government and "centuries" away from self-rule. Their first contact with Europeans had resulted in enslavement, which was understandable because they were "so much below the standard humanity of the invaders that it was difficult to treat them as members of

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, *Civitas Dei* [Volume 1] (London, 1934). p 2; cf Grigg, "Substitute Introduction to the Whitsuntide Egg". [July 1914], RT Papers c 779, fols 37-74., and [Kerr,] "Draft Chapters on India" [1915], Lothian Papers 6, fols 6 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr, "Political Relations Between Advanced and Backward Peoples", *loc cit*, p 142.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, fol 152.

the same family".<sup>1</sup> Finally, there were the aboriginal races of the Americas and Australia. Their extinction was inevitable, and no cause for shame or regret.<sup>2</sup>

It is possible to distinguish two separate, although clearly related, imperatives which, in Round Table eyes, made European rule of non-Europeans not only essential but beneficent. The first may be described as the regulatory imperative, arising from the contact between races.

Members of the Round Table believed that conflict was endemic in the relations between races: this was certainly implied in their repeated assurances that the Empire/Commonwealth had ruled out the possibility of open war between its various components.<sup>3</sup> Drawing heavily on contemporary accounts such as that by Dr John Paton on the New Hebrides, it was argued that only control by some "advanced" power could ensure the maintenance of order and mitigate the disruptive aspects of Western intrusion.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of Imperial control was thus to ensure the satisfaction of European demands, while repressing the conflict and violence which was their natural corollary.

The second reason for European rule of non-Europeans may be described

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<sup>1</sup> Grigg, "Substitute Introduction to the Whitsuntide Egg", loc cit, fol 52.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, *With Milner in South Africa* [early diaries] (Oxford, 1951), p 226. Cf [Kerr,] "The New Problem of Africa", RT, June 1927, pp 454-5.

<sup>3</sup> Eg Kerr, *What the British Empire Really Stands For* (Toronto, 1917), pp 14-15; Coupland, "Citizenship in the British Commonwealth" [lecture of 10 Oct 1917], Lothian Papers 16, fols 507-8.

<sup>4</sup> Kerr, "Political Relations Between Advanced and Backward Peoples", loc cit, pp 143-52.

as the missionary imperative, by which is meant the transplantation of European (or specifically British) social, cultural, religious and, eventually, political norms. A prerequisite for such activity was, of course, the destruction or at least modification of indigenous systems and values. It is therefore hardly surprising to find members of the Round Table adopting a consistently dismissive attitude toward non-European cultures, especially where those cultures appeared to differ markedly from European norms. Hinduism was described as "a religion [which] has little to do with morality", a mere amalgam of "dismal obscurantism and thaumaturgic priestcraft". A rather more sympathetic approach was taken toward Islam, with its insistence on monotheism, scripture and cow-eating, as also toward the Arya Samáj, with its semi-Christian version of Hinduism.<sup>1</sup>

In his wartime leading articles, Kerr repeatedly referred to the necessity of "trusteeship" as the only alternative to "anarchy". He also emphasised the responsibility "to lay the material and moral foundations on which the structure of civilized self-government may eventually be built". A benevolent trusteeship had, he claimed, characterised British rule "for more than a century".<sup>2</sup> Equally, Kerr asserted that Germany's "selfish" and "oppressive" colonialism disqualified her from any right to control dependencies.<sup>3</sup>

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1 [Marris,] "Hindus and Mohammedans", RT, May 1911, p 302; [Marris,] "Memorandum" (April 1914), RT Papers c 827, fols 6-73 (fol 16); [R E Holland, revised by Marris,] "The Arya Samáj", RT, Sept 1913, pp 614-36.

2 [Kerr,] "The Harvest of the War", RT, Dec 1915, pp 1-32 (quotations from pp 12-13 and 30).

3 [Kerr,] "The Foundations of Peace", RT, June 1915, pp 589-625 (quotations from p 614).

Kerr and Curtis identified American anti-colonialism as the main obstacle both to a closer understanding between Britain and the United States and to a resolution of the wartime colonial question satisfactory to British interests.

As Kerr wrote, in the closing stages of the war, Americans (like the inhabitants of the Dominions) possessed a "childlike faith in the virtues of democracy and *laissez faire*" [sic]. Inasmuch as they recognised the "necessity of some civilised control over politically backward peoples", they were likely to "force us into some kind of international system which may be a source of serious friction in the future". Kerr therefore urged Curtis to visit America to "get it into Wilson's head", or at least "into the heads of the editors of some of the leading papers", that, while international control might be desirable, international administration would be disastrous. Moreover, Curtis should assert "that the assumption of a share in the burden of world government is just as great and glorious a responsibility as participation in the war".<sup>1</sup>

While Curtis did not go to America as Kerr wished, he did write a powerful article for the December 1918 *Round Table* arguing these very points. The American States' failure to control the "vacant lands" to their west in the period before Federation, and the derelict state of Egypt before British intervention, were held to be sufficient proof of the impossibility of co-operative control of dependencies. The only solution, Curtis argued, was for "some democratic Power" to "be made responsible for creating and maintaining peace, order, and good government . . . subject to

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 15 Oct 1918, RT Papers c 810, fols 229-37; cf Feetham to Curtis, 2 Oct 1918, (SA file,) RT (O) Papers.



conditions laid down in treaties". Curtis further suggested that the United States should accept the "responsibility" for "some or all of the regions of the Middle East".

"Her very detachment renders her an ideal custodian of the Dardanelles. For exactly similar reasons her task in preserving the autonomy of Armenia, Arabia, and Persia will be easier than if it were to rest in our hands. Her vast Jewish population pre-eminently fits her to protect Palestine."

"The future position of America in the world", Curtis summarised his argument, ". . . is the great issue which now hangs on the Peace Conference".<sup>1</sup>

#### The Peace Settlement

The Round Tablers transferred almost bodily to Paris for the Peace Conference; even Curtis found an official post, as part of Cecil's League of Nations section. Again it was Kerr who occupied the most influential position as Lloyd George's secretary, adviser, and representative in various committees and ad hoc confabulations.<sup>2</sup> The question which naturally arises is whether, as a group, the Round Table exercised a significant influence over the making of the peace. The answer is largely negative. Other than Kerr, the Round Tablers (including Milner) were relatively marginal figures at the Conference. Kerr himself exercised

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<sup>1</sup> [Curtis,] "Windows of Freedom", *RT*, Dec 1918 (pp 1-48), pp 1 ("The future position . . .") and 20-36. Curtis's plea for American involvement was reiterated in "America and World Responsibility: First and Second Thoughts", *RT*, March 1919, pp 249-60.

<sup>2</sup> See here John Turner and Michael Dockrill, "Philip Kerr at 10 Downing Street, 1916-21", in Turner (ed), *The Larger Idea* (London, 1988), esp pp 42-52.

influence only as Lloyd George's "watchdog".<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Round Tablers' articulation of British war aims had been largely propagandist both in intention and in effect, and did not constitute the kind of detailed programme which could provide the basis for concerted political action.

On the central issue of the terms to be imposed on Germany, virtually all the Round Tablers followed Milner in hoping - vainly, as it transpired - for a moderate peace.<sup>2</sup> A recurrent motif was the conviction that, whatever terms were imposed, Germany would remain a Great Power, and that a vindictive peace would only serve to hasten another war or to drive the German people to Bolshevism. Only a peace of conciliation could ensure the triumph of democracy in Germany, and thereby provide real security for the victorious Powers.<sup>3</sup>

Zimmern condemned Lloyd George's "odious" election campaign. Kerr protested, but found himself in a minority of one: "the views expressed were held very strongly by all the members of the Editorial Committee except yourself", Kerr was informed.<sup>4</sup> Kerr also found himself isolated on the question of reparations.<sup>5</sup> As early as 1912, Brand had anticipated

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<sup>1</sup> Hankey, *The Supreme Control at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (London, 1963), p 97.

<sup>2</sup> For Milner's views, and the controversy over his *Evening Standard* interview of October 1918, see in particular Terence O'Brien, *Milner* (London, 1979), ch 13.

<sup>3</sup> "The End of the War", *RT*, Dec 1918 (pp 48-87), pp 78 ff.

<sup>4</sup> [Zimmern,] "United Kingdom: The General Election", *RT*, March 1919 (pp 356-59), p 359; Coupland to Kerr, 13 March 1919, Lothian Papers 487, fol 2.

<sup>5</sup> "My doubts about the wisdom of these clauses are not on the score of either expediency or justice, but on the score that I am not sure that the Allies will have the clearsightedness and the resolution to live up to them": Kerr to Coupland, 15 Aug 1919, Lothian Papers 489 (single item).

Keynes's argument by pointing out the disastrous effects on Germany itself of the outflow from France following the 1870-71 war.<sup>1</sup> *Round Table* comment on the reparations clauses of the Treaty of Versailles followed the same line of argument: "A vast indemnity . . . will . . . act as a forcing house to German exports to the detriment of British trade".<sup>2</sup> Moreover,

"if these clauses are taken to mean what a very large section of public opinion in this country, and a still larger section in France, believes and wishes them to mean, they will form a constant and powerful incentive to Germany to repudiate her undertakings in all parts of the peace".<sup>3</sup>

The *Round Table* found other clauses in the Treaty pointing in the same direction: the proposal to try the Kaiser, the clause forbidding union between Germany and Austria, the fate of "other millions of German race", the clauses relating to the Saar Valley and the Rhineland, "the disproportion enforced by the League between Germany's armaments and those of everybody else". Generally, the Treaty was full of "latent dangers", basing security "on a balance of forces which cannot possibly endure".<sup>4</sup>

One aspect of the peace settlement which the *Round Table* did not criticise was that relating to the control of Germany's former colonies and the Arab territories seized from Turkey. On the question of American acceptance of "responsibility" for the Middle East, the Round Tablers were, of course, disappointed. On the question of national rather than international administration they were not. Here they were helped

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1 [Brand,] "Lombard Street and War", *RT*, March 1912, pp 246-84.

2 [Brand,] "Finance and Reparation", *RT*, June 1919 (pp 455-67), pp 463-64.

3 "The Peace of Versailles", *RT*, June 1919 (pp 429-54), p 442.

4 *Ibid*, pp 440-51.

considerably by Beer, who had already made clear his own belief that international administration of colonies would prove "disastrous".<sup>1</sup> At Beer's request, all the Round Table groups collected cuttings, articles and books, and in some cases composed memoranda, as ammunition for him to use.<sup>2</sup> As Wilson's colonial expert at the peace conference, Beer was instrumental in shaping the eventual Mandate system.<sup>3</sup> Britain and the Dominions were rewarded by the lion's share of the territories thus disposed. The limitations on the exercise of Imperial control imposed by the terms of the Mandates were considered, by the Round Tablers at least, as of little importance. Indeed, it was generally agreed that the Mandates idea "singles out and develops the best side of what has been done hitherto by Western administration", and "was, in fact, an application of the 'commonwealth' idea".<sup>4</sup>

The Round Table group was less pleased with the eventual form taken by the League of Nations. The Round Tablers' wartime articles envisaged an institution considerably looser than that proposed by Cecil or Wilson. Kerr thought that "the chief danger to [any League] . . . is that it should become discredited through its inability to live up to the expectations

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<sup>1</sup> [Beer,] "America's War Aims", *RT*, March 1918 (pp 238-61), p 249.

<sup>2</sup> See, eg, Coupland to Laby, 28 Dec 1917, and Laby to Coupland, 25 Feb 1918, (Aus file,) *RT (O) Papers*.

<sup>3</sup> See W R Louis, "The United States and the African Peace Settlement of 1919: The Pilgrimage of George Louis Beer", *Journal of African History*, Vol IV, no 3 (1963), pp 413-33; also Kerr to Charles P Howland, 6 June 1929, *Lothian Papers* 235, fols 154-57.

<sup>4</sup> "The Outlook in the Middle East", *RT*, Dec 1919 (pp 55-97), p 56.

which have been formed of it".<sup>1</sup> The Round Table's views were reiterated in a series of articles published during the peace negotiations, and in a memorandum drawn up for Lloyd George by Kerr.<sup>2</sup> These had little effect. The League of Nations contained many of the features which the Round Tablers had warned against. Nevertheless, the Moot accepted it, as the price to be paid for American involvement in upholding the peace settlement.<sup>3</sup>

Wilson's failure to push the Treaty/League scheme through Congress - foreseen by Beer in 1917<sup>4</sup> - substantially confirmed the Moot's initial misgivings. The Senate's reservations, in the opinion of the *Round Table*, "have rendered [the League] the great service of pointing clearly to the flaws which at present neutralise its worth": in particular, "that the Peace of Versailles attempted too much, and that the Covenant, which guarantees it, implies a capacity for united action between the Allies which the facts do not warrant". The Senate was in fact expressing opinions which would also be held in the British Empire, were the true outlines of the situation known: "none of the democracies of the British Empire has grasped the extent of its obligations to the League . . . or would hesitate to repudiate them at once, if put to the test". The

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Victory that Will End War", *RT*, March 1918, pp 221-37. For authorship (not in Butler), see Coupland to Brand, 23 Feb 1918, RT Papers c 847, fols 4-7.

<sup>2</sup> [Curtis,] "Windows of Freedom", *RT*, Dec 1918, pp 12-20; [Kerr,] "The Practical Organisation of Peace", *RT*, March 1919, pp 217-48; [Kerr,] Memorandum on the League of Nations, [Jan 1919,] Lothian Papers 54, fols 31-33.

<sup>3</sup> [Curtis,] "The League of Nations and the British Commonwealth", *RT*, June 1919 (pp 468-94), esp pp 482-87.

<sup>4</sup> [Beer,] "The United States and the Future Peace", *RT*, March 1917 (pp 285-317), pp 308 ff.



continuation of such an unrealistic situation could only bring harm, both to the cause of international stability and to the British Empire. It was therefore imperative to work for a reconstruction of the League, such as might bring commitments back into line with capacity to fulfil them, and open the doors to American involvement.' This was a task which was to preoccupy the Round Table for much of the following two decades.

### Curtis and Dyarchy

Curtis later credited Marris with converting him to the idea of eventual self-government for India in 1909.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence of Curtis voicing his new-found belief at such an early stage; nevertheless, Marris's influence did come to be felt, through Kerr rather than Curtis.

The Marris/Kerr argument initially encountered a great deal of resistance from within the Moot. Curtis acknowledged its propagandist value, but hedged its practical corollaries. Malcolm deplored the influence of "our Indian experts".<sup>3</sup> For the moment, the Moot preferred to

<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The British Empire, the League of Nations and the United States", RT, March 1920 (pp 221-53), pp 226-38.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p 139.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm, "Memorandum", nd [1912], RT Papers c 826, fols 167-72. See above, pp 90-92.

follow the advice of another, more conservative, "Indian expert": Sir Valentine Chirol. In Chirol's view, Indian self-government was "inconceivable . . . within any reasonably measurable period of time, be it generations or centuries", and mention of it was "most inadvisable".<sup>1</sup> It was Chirol, rather than any of the other "experts", who was asked to write the Indian chapter for Curtis's "egg".<sup>2</sup>

It would seem fair to assume that, had the second volume of *The Commonwealth of Nations* been published as planned, it would not have contained proposals as radical as those urged by Marris and Kerr in 1912. Such speculation receives support from the references to India in Curtis's *Problem of the Commonwealth*. Although publication under his own name gave Curtis a free hand - and he did modify some passages on India "to prevent a nationalist outburst"<sup>3</sup> - Curtis made no mention either of Indian demands for self-government or of Indian representation in the Imperial Parliament.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, he claimed that "Indian leaders" would admit that authority in India had to lie where it did, and that India was patently "unequal to the task of self-government".<sup>5</sup>

Despite Curtis's caution, it would not be true to say that Round Table policy on India remained locked in its pre-1912 mould. The war forced

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<sup>1</sup> Chirol, "Memorandum on India", June 1912, RT papers c 826, fols 214-21.

<sup>2</sup> Copy of Chirol's draft in RT Papers c 827, fols 167-234

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Milner, 24 Feb 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 38-41.

<sup>4</sup> Here, Curtis was criticised even by Chirol. See Curtis to Milner, 29 Nov 1915, Curtis Papers 2, fols 199-201.

<sup>5</sup> Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London, 1916), ch 19, "The Dependencies", esp pp 199-20.

change. India was denuded of British troops; war propaganda invited questioning of autocracy and alien rule; shortages and inflation ravaged the economy. The essential vulnerability - or, put another way, the consensual basis - of British rule became starkly apparent, while its critics swelled in number. As the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, realised in 1915, "India after the war will be a very complex question . . . . The old régime must be changed, and the people must have more to say to their own administration".<sup>1</sup>

Once again it was Marris who urged the Round Table to take a lead. "The situation which will shortly be upon us in India is a critical one", he warned, towards the end of 1915. Marris identified the demand which the nationalists were bound to make: Dominion self-government. It was, he declared, "impossible for the demand to be conceded". At the same time, it was impossible to proceed by an extension of the Morley-Minto principle. The latter would put Indians

"in the position of a powerful Opposition which can seriously influence and all but thwart the Government, but can yet never turn the Government out or replace it. Elsewhere in the history of British Dominions this has been the feature of a highly explosive and short-lived transitional period".

Marris therefore suggested pressing for Indian representation at the Imperial Conference to "buy time", and then for an Imperial Convention which would throw the whole weight of the self-governing Empire behind a

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<sup>1</sup> Hardinge to Sir Walter Lawrence, 29 July 1915, quoted in J Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power* (Cambridge, 1972), p 124. On the political effects of the war in India, see *Ibid*, esp pp 123-6, and Sir Algernon Rumbold, *Watershed in India, 1914-22* (London, 1979).

solution necessarily unsatisfying for the Indian nationalists.<sup>1</sup>

Marris's prognosis was discussed by a revived "Indian Noot", which consisted of Kerr, Curtis, Coupland, Weston, M C C Seton and four new members, Sir William Duke, Sir Lionel Abrahams, (Sir) Cecil Kisch and (Sir) J E Shuckburgh. Members of this group shared Marris's concern lest the Indian demand for Dominion self-government be granted by default. They also agreed that an extension of the Morley-Minto reforms would "involve progress towards paralysis of government rather than responsible government". Curtis

"therefore suggested . . . the possibility of proceeding on another principle, that of calling into existence provincial authorities responsible to Indian electorates, and delegating thereto specific functions and revenues, adding others from time to time as experience warranted".

Curtis's idea was accepted; and Duke (a member of the Bengal Executive Council before being appointed to the Council of India) was given the task of outlining the principle as it would apply in Bengal.<sup>2</sup> Copies of Duke's memorandum were sent to Lord Hardinge's successor as Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and to the Home Department of India.<sup>3</sup>

In October Curtis arrived in India. His first impressions confirmed the belief that India was heading for a "cosmic smash". The Indian

<sup>1</sup> Marris, "The Coming Crisis in India", 5 Oct 1915, RT Papers c 827, fols 79-97. Indian representation at the Imperial Conference had already been urged by a Round Table delegation to Austen Chamberlain and was urged again in "India and the Imperial Conference", RT, Dec 1915, pp 86-119.

<sup>2</sup> Duke's memorandum was printed as a pamphlet, *Suggestions for Constitutional Progress in the Indian Polity* (London, 1916), and in Curtis, *Dyarchy* (London, 1920), pp 1-37.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Lord Chelmsford, 8 Sept 1917, RT papers c 810, fols 146-52.

people were "as you see them in the Book of Genesis". To prepare them for self-government "needs generations of real education and patient work . . . yet the few thousands of articulates are demanding it within 25 years".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Curtis realised that "our only safety lies in guiding opinion instead of sitting on it".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis stayed in India until March 1918, reeling off a series of letters and *Studies* on the question of Indian self-government; organising a *Joint Address* from a group of Europeans and Indians in Bengal; and generally attempting to influence both Indian opinion and the lines of British policy, especially after the "Montagu Declaration" of August 1917 and the Secretary of State's decision to tour India.<sup>3</sup>

In one important respect, Curtis's opinions changed: he now definitely accepted the Marris/Kerr line on Indian representation in an Imperial Parliament. Britain's "war debt will to avoid bankruptcy have to be spread to the whole Commonwealth", including India. India's representation was necessary, because her money was needed.<sup>4</sup>

Curtis remained wholeheartedly opposed to the Congress/League demand for immediate "Dominion self-government". He similarly rejected any further moves on Morley-Minto lines, which he characterised as the "principle of strangling the responsible Executive by successive twists of

<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Zimmern, 29 Nov 1916, RT Papers c 817, fols 169-71.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Coupland, 15 March 1917, RT papers c 810, fols 12-16.

<sup>3</sup> See Deborah Lavin, "Lionel Curtis and Indian Dyarchy", in A Bosco (ed), *The Federal Idea*, Vol 1 (London, 1991). For the politics behind the Montagu Declaration, see Peter Robb, *The Government of India and Reform, 1916-21* (Oxford, 1976).

<sup>4</sup> Curtis [to Coupland], 27 July [1917], RT Papers c 810, fols 122-6.



the noose placed in the hands of irresponsible electorates".<sup>1</sup> Curtis's efforts were therefore directed towards elaborating the scheme of "dyarchy" sketched out in Duke's memorandum.

"Dyarchy" was a term borrowed from the Roman Emperor Augustus, who devolved responsibility for a range of minor matters to a "parallel government" controlled by the Senate. As applied to India, "dyarchy" entailed the creation of parallel political structures at provincial level: one in which an Indian executive would be responsible to an elected legislature, the other in which elected Indians would merely advise an autocratic Governor.

As Chirol observed, the scheme was "avowedly experimental".<sup>2</sup> The Imperial Parliament would control the pace of change, and the committee charged by it with examining Indians' progress would be empowered to recommend that previously "transferred" subjects be "reserved", as well as vice versa. Provincial Governors would retain a power of veto even on "transferred" subjects. The central Government would remain untouched until the last phase. Even at the end point of India's political evolution, Indians would have no choice whether or not "to remain an integral part of the British Commonwealth. Her foreign affairs are those of the whole Commonwealth. She can never therefore control them apart".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the very fact that Curtis was advocating reform put him in conflict with powerful forces both at home and in India.

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, *Letters to the People of India on Responsible Government*, (London edn, 1918), p 24.

<sup>2</sup> Chirol to Coupland, 16 Feb 1918, RT Papers c 880, fols 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis, *Letters to the People of India on Responsible Government* (London edn, 1918), p 61.

Curtis's perspective owed much to the influence of Marris, Meston and other Government of India reformers whose recognition of the need to conciliate Indian opinion brought them into conflict with the inertia particularly to be found in the Government's Home Department.<sup>1</sup> Curtis himself was increasingly critical of what he saw as the constitutional conservatism of the majority of the ICS. In turn, his abrasive manner won few friends; and his insistence on a "guiding policy" seemed to many naïve. As (Sir) Olaf Caroe later recalled, many Civilians feared "that the would-be reformers were intent on foisting on an unready India a top storey without a foundation".<sup>2</sup> The average District Officer was concerned to protect the peasantry, not to appease the intellectual élite. Moreover, in the context of war, the ICS looked at problems mainly from the point of view of maintaining law and order.<sup>3</sup> By the autumn of 1917, Curtis thought that even Marris was "travelling towards what to me seems reaction".<sup>4</sup> Marris, for his part, now thought that "the best service the R.T. can do to Indian politics till the crisis is over is to let them alone".<sup>5</sup>

In some respects, the Moot was also critical of Curtis's rôle in India. Curtis was an employee of the Round Table and was originally in

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<sup>1</sup> See D A Low, "The Government of India and the First Non-Co-Operation Movement, 1920-22" in R Kumar (ed) *Essays on Gandhian Politics* (Oxford, 1971), pp 298 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Caroe, "Lionel and O.C." (Aug 1962), RT Papers c 868, fols 101-05. Caroe himself composed a memorandum arguing for a much slower progress to self-government, starting at village and municipal level.

<sup>3</sup> [Hailey,] "Lionel Curtis" (1960), RT Papers c 864, fols 199-209.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Chirol, 24 Sept 1917, RT Papers c 804, fols 119-24; cf Curtis to Coupland, 15 Oct 1917, RT Papers c 810, fols 191-94.

<sup>5</sup> Marris to Coupland, 1 Oct 1917, RT Papers c 827, fols 136-41.

India to further Round Table business. The Moot did not share his enthusiasm for becoming embroiled in the quagmire of Indian politics. Matters came to a head in the summer of 1917. "After some discussion", Kerr was deputed

"to write to you and say that they thought it was essential that you should make it clear . . . that in expressing views about the future of self-government in India, you were expressing your own views only and not those of the Round Table movement".<sup>1</sup>

Kerr himself now doubted whether Indians in fact wanted "the Western paraphernalia of suffrage and ballot-box" rather than the enhancement of existing "centres of Indian authority".<sup>2</sup> Any hopes Curtis may have had of using Kerr as a channel for his own views were to be disappointed; indeed, a memorandum written by Kerr for the Prime Minister specifically discounted the idea of a "'formula' or general declaration of policy" (six weeks before the "Montagu Declaration"), and made no mention of "dyarchy".<sup>3</sup>

Curtis's hand was considerably strengthened following the "Montagu Declaration" of 20 August 1917, which promised "the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the Empire". The Moot now agreed to act as agents for the distribution of Curtis's Indian tracts, and in March 1918 organised a London edition of Curtis's *Letters to the People of India on Responsible Government*.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, tensions still arose. Curtis's attempts to have the *Round Table* publish articles

<sup>1</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 9 July 1917, RT Papers c 810, fols 106-7, responding to Curtis to Coupland, 19 May 1917, *ibid.*, fols 54-65..

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 21 July 1917, Lothian Papers 33, fols 19-21.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr, "Indian Reforms", 7 July 1917, Lothian Papers 32, fols 1-9.

<sup>4</sup> See RT Papers c 830, *passim*.

on India which reflected a viewpoint similar to his own met with considerable resistance. One such article, apparently by L F Rushbrook Williams, was rejected after Marris's criticism of the author's expertise: "He has not been long in India, and like Curtis has seen only one side of Indian life".<sup>1</sup>

Curtis's attempt to find a middle path between the unrealistic expectations of Indian nationalists and the unwarranted fears of the bulk of Indian Civilians was shared by Edwin Montagu. Indeed, Montagu was writing in his diary early in 1918 that "I find that I see eye to eye with [Curtis] on every question".<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly Montagu was influenced not solely by the persuasiveness of Curtis's arguments, but also by Curtis's impeccable Imperialist credentials and his connections through the Round Table. Montagu himself was painfully aware of how precarious was his own political leverage in Whitehall, Westminster and Downing Street.<sup>3</sup>

Montagu's report (written, under instruction, by Marris) was completed after Curtis had returned to England. It explicitly disavowed both the Congress/League and Curtis's *Joint Address* schemes; nevertheless, it incorporated significant elements of the latter, in particular the proposal of "specific devolution" at the provincial level. Where it differed was in failing to recommend a complete geographical, administrative and fiduciary separation between the two provincial governments, and in proposing an

<sup>1</sup> Marris to Coupland, 1 Oct 1917, RT Papers c 827, fols 136-41.

<sup>2</sup> [Montagu's Indian diary, unpublished version,] Lothian Papers 35 and 36 (quotation from 36, fol 113). The published version has Curtis agreeing with Montagu: Venetia Montagu (ed), *Edwin Montagu: An Indian Diary* (London, 1930), p 233.

<sup>3</sup> See eg Montagu to Kerr, 12 May 1919, Lothian Papers 729, item 1.

extension of the representative principle at the Government of India level. Curtis accepted the report as a workable outline, hoping that "if subjected to careful enquiry [it] can be made a thoroughly sound one in the course of its passage through Parliament".<sup>1</sup>

Curtis's activity during the period of Parliamentary and public debate on the Report was directed two ways: first, towards securing the necessity of some such reform against the reactionary opposition of the *Morning Post/Spectator* wing of the Conservatives, and secondly, towards modification of the Report's proposals to bring them to resemble more closely his own.

In pursuit of the first objective, Curtis urged a reaffirmation of the original "Montagu Declaration": "to a great extent the attacks which are being directed against the Report are really directed against the Pronouncement of the 20th August".<sup>2</sup> Curtis emphasised the dangers of delay, claiming, somewhat fancifully, that Indians saw the Report "as the sun obscuring the stars, but bathing the whole world in light". Curtis also emphasised the necessity of going to Paris "with a clear conscience".<sup>3</sup>

The London group as a whole now threw its weight behind Indian reform, even claiming it as the fruit of Round Table activity.<sup>4</sup> Meston was

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to N Chamberlain, 18 July 1918, Lothian Papers 33, fols 42-46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*; of Curtis to Lord Sinha, 19 July 1918, Lothian Papers 33, fols 47-8.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to *The Times*, 22 July 1918.

<sup>4</sup> eg [Coupland] to B Dunfield, 17 June 1918, RT Papers c 802, fols 119-22. Cf Dove, "The Round Table: A Mystery Probed", 1924, Brand Papers, box 70.



induced to write a *Round Table* article welcoming Montagu's proposals (but emphasising their inadequacy where they strayed from Curtis's lines);<sup>1</sup> a "little Committee" was set up with the object of "placing" articles on India in various papers and journals;<sup>2</sup> and money was provided to "such propagandist associations as the VEA and YMCA" to pay for lectures bringing "the whole Indian problem before the public".<sup>3</sup>

In pursuit of his second objective, Curtis pressed for a Select Committee to examine the report, suggesting Selborne as Chairman,<sup>4</sup> and then presenting it with a lengthy re-statement of his case.<sup>5</sup> Here Curtis was less successful. The Government of India Act differed in some respects from Montagu's original proposals, but not in those which Curtis considered important. But if Curtis was not entirely satisfied with the end result, his share in its making was without doubt an important one. The original impetus, and most of the ideas, came from Marris and other reformers in the Government of India. Nevertheless, when they (and the Moot) hesitated, Curtis himself persisted. Moreover, Curtis's distinctive contribution was to present reform as the logical outcome of British rule, rather than as a panic reaction to crisis. Thereby he helped not only to make reform

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1 [Meston,] "The Montagu-Chelmsford Report", *RT*, Sept 1918, pp 778-802.

2 [Curtis?] to H E Egerton, 19 July 1918, *RT Papers* c 831, fol 109.

3 [Coupland?] to E Barker, 15 July 1918, *RT Papers* c 831, fols 105-6. Details of money spent in fols 112 and 135.

4 Curtis to Montagu, 3 Aug 1918, *Lothian Papers* 33, fols 54-7.

5 *Memorandum of Evidence to the Joint Select Committee* . . . (London, 1919), reprinted in *Dyarchy* (London, 1920), pp 482-552.

respectable in England, but to strengthen the hand of "moderates" in India. In Hailey's judgment, this was the real value of Curtis's work: "the encouragement he gave to the . . . 'Liberal' section of advanced thought at a critical period in Indian history".<sup>1</sup>

#### Sinn Féin and the Anglo-Irish Treaty

Ireland was another area where the Round Tablers (and particularly Curtis) were able to exert an influence on British policy. Again the Round Tablers' intervention was reactive - responding to a situation created by the Irish themselves - and primarily motivated by a desire for consolidation. Some shift in British policy became inevitable. Once the Round Tablers grasped this, their peculiar contribution was again to interpret that shift in terms of the continuities of British political tradition, thereby portraying concession as the product not of weakness but of the continuing strength and adaptability of British ideals.

The Easter Rising of 1916, as Nicholas Mansergh later wrote, effected "a psychological transformation so considerable as to constitute a near unbridgeable gulf in outlook and understanding".<sup>2</sup> At the time, of course, this was by no means clear.

The Moot remained resolutely opposed to Dominion status for Ireland until the summer of 1921. One reason was its belief that the relationship between Britain and the Dominions was dependent on a spirit of goodwill and compromise which was entirely lacking in Anglo-Irish relations. Writing for the June 1918 *Round Table*, Kerr adduced several more reasons why "a

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<sup>1</sup> [Hailey,] "Lionel Curtis" [1960], RT Papers c 864, fols 199-209.

<sup>2</sup> N Mansergh, *The Unsolved Question* (London, 1991), p 81.

solution which has worked elsewhere" would not be appropriate for Ireland: her geographical proximity to Britain, which prevented Britain from allowing her independent control of armed forces, munitions, naval bases, harbours and wireless; the position of Ulster, which would never submit without safeguards to "a Roman Catholic majority which has now shown that its political life is mainly controlled by its clergy and bishops"; the chaos which would result from separate tariffs and income taxes. Moreover, there was a "larger aspect" to the question.

"We are to-day fighting two forces which stand across the path to a true Commonwealth - one is the tendency to autocracy, the other the tendency to anarchy . . . . We have all begun to see the dangers of autocracy. We are not so familiar with the subtle anarchism latent in the gospel of self-determination."<sup>1</sup>

Dominion status was therefore at best a pis aller, as far as the Round Tablers were concerned. For most, the preferred solution remained "Home Rule All Round", which once again grew in attractiveness as the necessity of re-casting the 1914 compromise became more obvious.

The first move in re-opening the campaign for "Home Rule All Round" was made by Selborne, who wrote two articles for the *Morning Post* in August 1916.<sup>2</sup> Selborne himself was a reluctant convert to devolution: on the whole, he thought the Irish "quite unsuited" to parliamentary self-government.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, he and Oliver worked closely for the next two

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Irish Crisis", *RT*, June 1918, pp 496-525.

<sup>2</sup> *Morning Post*, 8 Aug 1916 and 18 Aug 1916. Selborne's and Oliver's activities have again been well covered by John Kendle in *Ireland and the Federal Solution* (Kingston, 1989), pp 179 ff. See also Kendle, "Federalism and the Irish Problem in 1916", *History*, Vol LVI (1971), pp 207-30, and D G Boyce and J O Stubbs, "F S Oliver, Lord Selborne and Federalism", *JICH*, Vol V (1976), pp 53-81.

<sup>3</sup> Selborne to Oliver, 14 March 1917, Oliver Papers 95, fols 134-38.

years, pushing the federal scheme in various pamphlets, memoranda and letters, and in meetings with leading policy-makers. The federalists were particularly active during the early months of the Irish Convention, which met in Dublin from July 1917. A further bout of activity accompanied the setting-up of the Cabinet's Irish committee under Walter Long in April 1918.

The attitude of the Moot as a whole remained somewhat ambiguous throughout this period. As late as May 1918, Curtis was pressing the Moot to stop being "Asquithian" and come down firmly in favour of "Home Rule All Round"; Hitchens was as "always . . . opposed", but agreed to "concede the point if the rest of us agree".<sup>1</sup> Only in September 1918 did the *Round Table* print an article such as Curtis and the majority desired. By then, the deterioration of the Irish situation was reflected in the suggestion that there was "no reason to insist on contractual equality in a measure of devolution".<sup>2</sup> Subsequent references to federalism were less than optimistic. In June 1919 it was suggested that federalism "has never been considered in Ireland upon its merits"; six months later, the *Round Table* was forced to admit that "in the Ireland of to-day it will be difficult even to get it a hearing".<sup>3</sup>

The latter remark exposed the weakness of the federalist case. For southern Ireland, federalism would have meant accepting powers less extensive than those contained in the original Home Rule Act; and this in a

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<sup>1</sup> [Coupland] to Brand, 14 May 1918, RT Papers c 803, fol 127.

<sup>2</sup> [Curtis,] "The Better Government of the United Kingdom", RT, Sept 1918 (pp 750-77), p 768.

<sup>3</sup> "United Kingdom: Public Opinion in Ireland" [from Dublin], RT, June 1919 (pp 580-87), p 583; "United Kingdom: Ireland: The New Interest in England" [from London], RT, Dec 1919 (pp 124-27), p 126.



context in which the constitutional Nationalists were steadily losing ground to the Sinn Féiners.

Initially, the *Round Table*, and particularly the magazine's Irish correspondent<sup>1</sup>, cast doubt on the extent of Sinn Féin's real support. Republicanism represented "a mood rather than a policy".<sup>2</sup> Southern Ireland was "not so united as it seems", and "a majority would work any scheme which really settled the question". Only the insurgents' terrorism prevented the free expression of "common sense".<sup>3</sup> The *Round Table* therefore exhorted the Government to redouble its efforts to suppress the "armed conspiracy", "and so make it possible for reasonable men of good will once more to play their part".<sup>4</sup>

While thus uncompromising in their attitude to Sinn Féin insurgency, the Round Tablers felt a growing sense of unease with the lack of success of British methods of coercion and with the resilience of Nationalist sentiment. They were also apprehensive of the damage being done to Britain's Imperial and international prestige by the Irish imbroglio. In Australia, Irish sentiment was believed to have been largely responsible

<sup>1</sup> Possibly Allison Phillips (a follower of Sir Horace Plunkett); but possibly J J Horgan, then Crown Solicitor in Cork, and later a regular *Round Table* contributor. The Moot was especially secretive about the identity of its Irish correspondent before 1924, for obvious reasons.

<sup>2</sup> "United Kingdom: Public Opinion in Ireland" [from Dublin], *RT*, June 1919 (pp 580-87), pp 581-82.

<sup>3</sup> "United Kingdom: The Irish Problem Once More" [London], *RT*, March 1920 (pp 368-80), pp 377-79.

<sup>4</sup> "United Kingdom: The Situation in Ireland" [Dublin], *RT*, June 1920 (pp 635-39), pp 638-39.



for the failure of the conscription referenda during wartime.<sup>1</sup> After the war, the crisis in Ireland was "known to obstruct a really thorough-going understanding with the United States".<sup>2</sup> "Irishmen everywhere", the *Round Table* observed in March 1920,

"are using their unique gifts of intelligence and oratory and political organisation and propaganda to create suspicion and to separate and estrange. . . What a difference it would make if those gifts were turned the other way - to softening and adapting and brightening the free civilisation of the Anglo-Saxon world, and explaining it to the backward millions of the earth!"<sup>3</sup>

The political advantages of a settlement were thus clear to the Round Tablers. What was less clear was the basis upon which such a settlement could be agreed. The magazine's Irish correspondent was not convinced that Dominion status would lead inexorably to independence, taking issue with Dicey's "remarkable statement" that the Dominions enjoyed a "right to secede".<sup>4</sup> The London Moot, on the other hand, believed that "Dominion self-government" would reduce "the over-riding authority of Westminster . . . (as in Canada and Australia) to a shadow".<sup>5</sup>

Sinn Féin's rejection of the 1920 Act indicated the final exhaustion of attempts to appease Irish Nationalism on a basis of provincial

<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Milner, 16 Oct 1916, RT Papers c 780, fols 189-95; T H Laby to Coupland, 8 Jan 1917, Lothian Papers 476, fol 3.

<sup>2</sup> "United Kingdom: Public Opinion in Ireland" [Dublin], *RT*, June 1919 (pp 580-87), p 580. Cf Brand to Charles Altschul, 16 June 1919, Brand Papers, box 12: the settlement of the Irish question being "the one thing" which would remove American "suspicion of all our motives".

<sup>3</sup> "United Kingdom: The Irish Problem Once More" [London], *RT*, March 1920 (pp 368-80), p 380.

<sup>4</sup> "United Kingdom: Public Opinion in Ireland" [Dublin], *RT*, June 1919, p 582.

<sup>5</sup> "United Kingdom: Ireland: the New Interest in England" [London], *RT*, Dec 1919 (pp 124-27), p 126.

devolution. The British Government was now faced with a clear choice, in Winston Churchill's words, between "war with the utmost violence" and "peace with the utmost patience". The former course of action apparently commended itself to Lloyd George and the bulk of his Unionist colleagues, although even they shrank from the measures which the army believed necessary.<sup>1</sup> The option of compromise, with Dominion status as the most frequently suggested basis, was supported by Labour, Asquithian Liberals, large numbers of Southern Unionists and Dublin officials, significant sections of the British press (including Northcliffe's *Times*), and broad swathes of Dominion and American opinion.<sup>2</sup>

The London Moot was torn between loyalty to the Union and desire for an end to Britain's costly and embarrassing embroilment. It was therefore agreed to send Curtis and Dove to Dublin, to assess the relative merits of the options before the Government, and to report on the situation for the magazine.<sup>3</sup> The result was a remarkable article in the *Round Table* of June 1921, which registered a decisive shift in the magazine's attitude, in favour of compromise and settlement on a basis little short of Dominion status. This was, Curtis asserted, "a conflict in which no sense of genuine triumph can be felt". Even if the British army managed to pacify the country, it would do so by methods which were "a negation of the principle for which [the British Empire/Commonwealth] has stood". Moreover, there would be no "finality" in such an outcome.

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<sup>1</sup> See N Mansergh, *The Unsolved Question* (London, 1991), pp 161 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 145-48 and *passim*; D G Boyce, *Englishmen and Irish Troubles: British Public Opinion and the Making of Irish Policy, 1918-22* (London, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, 10 March 1921, RT (O) Papers. The Round Tablers stayed with Plunkett, but it is not clear who else they met.

"Want of experience in handling facts has left the Irish mind out of touch with actualities. No cure will now reach the root of this malady which does not give Ireland the strongest dose of responsibility which she herself is able to take".

While it was "impossible" to allow Ireland control of her own navy and bases or to secede from the Empire, in all other respects (including tariffs) southern Ireland should be given powers commensurate with "colonial autonomy". The six counties of Ulster should be excluded. "Southern Ireland must be free to choose its rulers, and Ulster must have time to see how she [*sic*] uses that freedom before a new prospect of unity for Ireland can dawn."

It was only relatively late in the day that the *Round Table* added its voice to those calling for a Dominion-type settlement in Ireland, and only when the possibility of reaching a settlement by smaller concessions had clearly been exhausted. Nevertheless, at the time of its publication, Curtis's article was considerably in advance of actual Government policy. It was amended to make clear "that the present situation . . . was not exclusively the fault of Great Britain"; but the Moot as a whole accepted his argument.<sup>2</sup> However, the Round Table lost a number of its Unionist allies over the issue, including at least one member, Lord Selborne, who "took to heart very deeply" the rôle played by Curtis.<sup>3</sup>

Curtis's article preceded a similar shift in Government policy only

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<sup>1</sup> [Curtis,] "Ireland", *RT*, June 1921 (pp 465-534), pp 492, 505, 511-12, 515, 520.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, 3 May 1921, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Lord Baden Powell, 30 July 1932, Curtis Papers 91, fols 23-24.

by a few weeks. Brought to Lloyd George's attention by Grigg, his article itself played some part in bringing about that shift.<sup>1</sup> Over the next few months, Curtis continued to provide Grigg with a stream of advice on questions of tactics and presentation. The basic principle of settlement being accepted, that advice tended to be of a conservative nature. Initially, Curtis hoped that the Government would "use the agency of Ulster" to obtain moderation from Sinn Féin.<sup>2</sup> Once it became clear that Craig was not willing to let Ulster be used in such a way, Curtis fell back on the Empire, urging "that no proposals can be entertained which would have the effect of depriving Irishmen of the citizenship which Australians, Canadians and South Africans enjoy (as well as ourselves)".<sup>3</sup> On the whole, Curtis believed that the concessions contained in Lloyd George's preliminary correspondence with de Valera "may . . . have gone beyond the limits of the possible".<sup>4</sup>

Curtis's interest in the Irish settlement - and, no doubt, his insistence on setting limits to concession - was rewarded by his appointment as Second Secretary to the British delegation which met with Sinn Féin's representatives from October to December 1921. Oliver thought that the "best hope" for the failure of the Conference lay in the possibility of collision between Curtis and Erskine Childers, Curtis's

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1 Dove to J K A Ilott, 11 June 1923, Brand Papers, box 70; Curtis to Macadam, 6 July 1953, Curtis Papers 89, fol 111.

2 Curtis to Grigg, 24 June 1921, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999. Curtis's article had originally envisaged Dominion status for the whole of Ireland, but had been amended by the Moot to advocate exclusion: Minutes of RT meeting, 3 May 1921, RT (O) Papers.

3 Dove (conveying Curtis's views) to Grigg, 22 Sept 1921, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999..

4 Curtis to B C Valler, 23 Aug 1921, Curtis Papers 89, fols 64-65.

school-fellow from Haileybury who was now his opposite number on the Irish side.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Curtis's impact on the Conference was less dramatic, although Thomas Jones thought he made a significant contribution to keeping the negotiations within the parameters set by Dominion Status "with safeguards".<sup>2</sup>

The eventual Treaty Curtis welcomed, without irony, as "one of the greatest achievements in the history of the Empire".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the Round Table's original fear that Ireland would prove a loose cannon amongst the Dominions was to receive ample confirmation in subsequent decades.

#### Milner and Egypt

Although not technically a part of the British Empire, Egypt was an important field for British economic interests, and a crucial lynchpin in her worldwide military and communications network. Moreover, since Britain's occupation of the country in 1882 British control over the Khedive's administration had come to assume an increasingly colonial character. As Milner wrote in the *Round Table* in 1920, rather than "an entanglement from which we were anxious to escape, Egypt came to be regarded by us with pride, as one of the brightest spots in the whole field

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver to Grigg, 14 Oct 1921, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999. The contrast in temperament between Curtis and Childers is the subject of an illuminating passage in Frank Pakenham (Lord Longford)'s *Peace by Ordeal* (London, 1935), pp 140-41.

<sup>2</sup> See Keith Middlemas (ed), *Thomas Jones' Whitehall Diary: Vol III: Ireland, 1918-25* (London, 1971), *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Churchill, 17 July 1928, Curtis Papers 90 (fols 30-54), fols 30-31.



of British Imperial rule".<sup>1</sup> The latter interpretation Milner himself had done much to foster, with the publication in 1892 of his widely-read *England in Egypt*.

That the early Round Table conceived of Egypt as an integral part of the Empire is illustrated by the Koot's initial plans to set up a subsidiary group there, and to include a chapter on the country in the projected Round Table "egg".<sup>2</sup> Abdication of Britain's rôle was similarly anathema to the writer of the first (and only prewar) *Round Table* article on Egypt, who emphasised that "the plant of self-government is a slow-growing tree", and that in any case Egypt "cannot be independent".<sup>3</sup> As late as December 1918, Curtis pointed to Egypt as "an example of the countries of the Near East for which there is at present no hope except in the guardianship of some civilized State". Nevertheless, he also declared that Egypt was at least "gradually contracting the habits of order from which progress towards self-government can begin".<sup>4</sup>

It was not Egypt's "habits of order" but her habits of disorder which thrust the question of her self-government to the foreground of Imperial politics. Widespread disaffection broke into violent unrest in March 1919. Various temporary causes were at work, but the underlying cause, as Arnold Toynbee recognised, was a "new and genuine nationalism" encompassing "not only the ex-governing class and the students, but doctors of religion, barristers, officials, town workers and peasantry".

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<sup>1</sup> [Milner,] "The Situation in Egypt", *RT*, June 1920, p 520.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Kerr, 21 July 1910, Lothian Papers 1, fols 59-83; [Kerr,] "Memorandum" [1910], Lothian Papers 11, fols 46-58. Neither of these plans came to fruition.

<sup>3</sup> [Hon S Peel,] "Egypt", *RT*, Aug 1911, pp 443-58.

<sup>4</sup> [Curtis,] "Windows of Freedom", *RT*, Dec 1918, pp 23-24.

"The struggle for self-government is shifting its arena to the Middle East, and here, though we may be a Commonwealth in spirit and intention, we are in fact an Empire with the innate weaknesses of that polity."

Such was the strength of feeling in Egypt, Toynbee warned, that the "goodwill" upon which British rule had previously been able to count had now all but disappeared. Unless some new accommodation could be reached on the basis of Commonwealth rather than Empire, Britain would inevitably face a stark choice between "abdication or tyranny".<sup>1</sup>

The shift in the Round Table's appraisal of Britain's Egyptian policy was thus dramatic and swiftly accomplished. It was essentially a pragmatic response to realities which could no longer be ignored. The British Government's response was not, and could not be expected to have been, as clear-cut. Repressive measures were employed, with little success, and Milner was despatched to report on the situation before any other steps might be taken.

Milner was already convinced of the need for conciliation before he left England. That this was so is clear from an (anonymous) article which he wrote for the *Round Table* of June 1920. Milner emphasised the extent of Egyptian disaffection, which was so widespread and so deeply-felt that on present lines Britain would be forced not only "to keep a considerable army in Egypt" but also "to take the administration of the country entirely into British hands". This was "a prospect so formidable . . . that it is impossible to contemplate it without extreme aversion". Was it necessary? Britain certainly had "vital interests" in Egypt and the wider region - the

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<sup>1</sup> [Toynbee,] "The Outlook in the Middle East", *RT*, Dec 1919, pp 55-97 (quotations from pp 79 and 86).

Suez Canal, the garrisoning of troops, the exclusion of foreign powers, the maintenance of stability in the Sudan - as well as important economic interests in Egypt itself.

"But these are not interests, the defence of which necessarily involves our taking charge of the whole government of Egypt. A peaceful and progressive Egypt, in friendly alliance with Great Britain, and screened by that alliance from international interference, would completely serve our purpose."

That Milner should have found himself in the forefront of those urging a conciliatory policy in Egypt is at first sight more remarkable even than the volte-face performed by the Round Table as a whole. Milner never had any qualms about urging a policy of coercion in Ireland or South Africa. Nevertheless, in Milner's eyes Egypt was an altogether different case. There the Empire certainly had "vital interests", but these were mainly of a strategic or diplomatic kind. Above all, there was no comparable "loyalist" community whose interests needed protecting, and who could provide the basis for a continuation of the old, more or less colonial, régime. On the other hand, Milner believed, there was a good chance that Britain could pacify the "moderates", neutralise the "extremists", limit her liabilities, and still secure her most essential interests in the region. A conciliatory policy, as he put it to his Cabinet colleagues in 1921, was not only "just" but "politic . . . and calculated to strengthen and not to weaken our Imperial position".<sup>2</sup>

Milner's negotiating stance unsettled many Imperialists. Sir George Lloyd was mindful of the Indian situation in denouncing Milner's policy as

<sup>1</sup> [Milner,] "The Situation in Egypt", *RT*, June 1920, pp 520-35.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in John Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East: Imperial Policy in the Aftermath of War, 1918-22* (London, 1981), p 106. For Milner's mission to Egypt and its outcome, see *ibid*, pp 84-109.

the first step in "withdrawing the legions".<sup>1</sup> Grigg had the Irish parallel more in mind in opposing "the moral claim of smaller communities to insist on rights and powers in conflict with the interest and even safety of larger communities".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Round Table as a whole welcomed the negotiations. Fears that "our action will be quoted to justify demands by other dependencies" were thought to be overblown: Egypt supplied "no valid precedent", because she was unusually homogeneous in race, language and religion, economically and politically advanced, and never technically a British dependency.<sup>3</sup>

The dramatic effect of a "generous" British gesture was an important element in Milner's and the Round Table's support for such a policy. Such hopes were scuttled, however, by Zaghlul's unwillingness to agree to British "reservations", and the Cabinet's unwillingness to concede Egyptian autonomy. It was not until February 1922 that Egypt received "Independence". By then the moment was lost. Dove was in Egypt at the time of the "Allenby Declaration", and in a series of letters to Brand (subsequently published in the *Round Table*), he described the "scepticism" and "suspicion" with which it was greeted. Nationalism was now "a landslide which carries everyone with it". It was in Britain's own interests to have a stable government in Egypt, and it was "part of our mission in the world" to encourage "responsibility". Dove could therefore

<sup>1</sup> John Charmley, *Lord Lloyd and the Decline of the British Empire* (London, 1987), p 95.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Sir V Chirol, 28 Dec 1921, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999; cf Grigg to Sir Godfrey Thomas, 26 Jan 1922, MSS Microfilm 1000.

<sup>3</sup> [D G Hogarth,] "Egypt a Nation", *RT*, Dec 1920, pp 32-49.

see "no alternative" to further concessions.<sup>1</sup>

As in the parallel cases of India and Ireland, the Round Table's analysis of Anglo-Egyptian relations was marked by a sudden but calculated shift. Although the Round Tablers were at pains to deny it at the time, this was a pattern which would later be repeated throughout the dependent Empire. The crucial ingredient was not metropolitan liberalism but indigenous revolt. Nevertheless, once galvanised, progressive ideology of the "Commonwealth" kind had an important rôle to play, in interpreting, mediating and attempting to reconcile the conflicting claims of Imperialism and Nationalism.

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1 [Dove,] "Letters from Egypt", RT, June 1922, pp 555-88.



## 6. THE ROUND TABLE BETWEEN THE WARS

It was the war which really put paid to the Round Tablers' original strategy. Wartime conditions were hardly conducive to the organisation of a movement for fundamental constitutional change: the outcome was too uncertain, and too much else was in a state of flux. Curtis's argument that co-operation would break down seemed at best "academic", and at worst perverse, when set against the massive Imperial war effort and the new developments in the constitution of the Empire.

Peace brought further complications: uncertainty over the position of the United States, now a major military and naval as well as economic power; a new context of international relations through the League of Nations, which effectively recognised the Dominions as sovereign states; a whole host of challenges to Britain's colonial rule; and, of course, the absence of any clear external threat which might be used to galvanise the Dominions into Union.

The need for a new strategy was clear. As Glazebrook emphasised early in 1919, "if the Round Table is to fulfil its destiny as a leader of thought in Imperial matters it must make a fresh start".<sup>1</sup>

### Altered Strategies

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the Moot remained committed to the eventual realisation of some form of imperial federation. This was the case even with those members who had been the fiercest critics of Curtis's particular solution. At the time of the Versailles conference, Brand wrote that he still believed an "organic union" of the Empire to be a possibility

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<sup>1</sup> Glazebrook to Coupland, 13 Feb 1919, RT Papers c 802, fols 179-81.

"not far distant".<sup>1</sup> Early in 1919 Coupland let it be known that

"most if not all of the members of the Moot are convinced that the case for organic union has been strengthened by the war and its sequel, and that steps should be taken as soon as may be possible or convenient to restate the case to the public".<sup>2</sup>

While there were lingering hopes of a constitutional convention until 1921<sup>3</sup>, the majority of the Moot soon realised that imperial federation was an "impracticable" proposition. With the disappearance of the German threat "the old motives and the old arguments for closer union of the Empire have entirely lost their force".<sup>4</sup> Both in Britain and in the Dominions it was clear that public opinion expected more of the League of Nations than did the Round Tablers themselves. Above all, the war and the peace negotiations had given an enormous boost to Dominion nationalism. By the spring of 1920, the stalwarts of the Melbourne group were forced to admit that "people are shying off Imperial Federation", and that any attempt to orchestrate a federationist movement from Britain "will be disastrous".<sup>5</sup> Curtis's arguments were now agreed to be outdated, and "a new catechism" was demanded before even the New Zealand groups could play any useful part in federationist propaganda.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brand to Sir Charles Addis, 16 Dec 1918, Brand Papers, box 12.

<sup>2</sup> Coupland to the Australian groups, 22 March 1919, RT Papers c 802, fols 183-84.

<sup>3</sup> See eg Curtis to Grigg, 2 June 1921, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999. Cf Loring Christie to Kerr, 12 Jan 1920, Lothian Papers 207, fols 182-87.

<sup>4</sup> Grigg, "Memorandum", 26 Oct 1920, Lothian Papers 17, fols 7-12.

<sup>5</sup> Sir J W Barrett to Curtis, 23 Feb 1920, Lothian Papers 495 (single item).

<sup>6</sup> H F von Haast to Curtis, 8 March 1920, Brand Papers, box 42.

Curtis and Malcolm continued to fight a rearguard action in favour of the Round Table sticking to its guns: "the more unacceptable the doctrine, the greater . . . is the need for the preacher".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of the Moot believed that the Round Table would only destroy its credibility by continuing to insist on an ideal solution.

Federation was not a matter of "practical" politics. Such an admission was made by Kerr, speaking personally, in Canada in November 1922<sup>2</sup> - a course which he defended as necessary to explode "the old complex" about the Round Table being "an intrigue against Canada's liberty, engineered from London"<sup>3</sup> - and in the *Round Table* magazine, on behalf of the London group, six months later.<sup>4</sup>

The Moot's decision to renounce its belief in the need for immediate federation was the result less of a change of heart than of careful consideration of tactics. Criticised by Coupland for supporting a policy which would leave the group merely "marking time"<sup>5</sup>, Dove justified the Round Table's announcement in terms which leave no doubt where the Moot's sympathies continued to lie.

"We have . . . been less 'prophetic' since the war, not from 'incuria' but because the majority of us, who still believe that some form of constitutional union must come some day if the Empire is to remain one, felt that in the new post-war mood of the Dominions more harm than good would be done by continually asseverating this . . . . Our present policy, good or bad, has been to let co-operation be tried, indeed to assist it in every possible

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm to Coupland, 22 Feb 1919, RT Papers c 814, fols 155-56.

<sup>2</sup> *Toronto Daily Star*, 7 Nov 1922, copy in Lothian Papers 19, fols 223-31.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 22 Nov 1922, Lothian Papers 19, fols 221-22.

<sup>4</sup> [Kerr,] "The New Imperial Problem", *RT*, June 1923, pp 484-5.

<sup>5</sup> Coupland to Dove, 28 Feb [1923], RT Papers c 804, fol 197.

way. Both its failures and its successes are milestones on our road, and in any case the King's Government has got to be carried on."

While the Round Table's "present principle is rather 'one step enough for me'", Dove concluded, "it has not altogether lost sight of the distant scene".<sup>1</sup>

Coupland was right in describing the Moot's attitude to imperial federation as one of "marking time". Even Curtis now admitted that "there is not the least chance of any public agreeing with my views". He realised that federation would take "the next few generations".<sup>2</sup> He even conceded that it was an open question whether federation would come about as a result of a breakdown of co-operation or of a gradual development of co-operative measures.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that he, and indeed other Round Tablers, still saw imperial union as a viable long-term goal. Imperial unity was a thing of the future, not of the past.

"Marking time" was not the only Round Table strategy for reaching this goal. As Dove indicated, the Moot admitted the "impracticability" of federation partly in order to be better placed to advocate intermediary, co-operative measures. The *Round Table* was, indeed, at the forefront of those pressing for a development of machinery for co-operative decision-making in the interwar years.<sup>4</sup>

The *Round Table*'s task of providing informed coverage of the "real" issues facing the Commonwealth lost none of its urgency now that federation

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<sup>1</sup> Dove to Coupland, 2 March 1923, Brand Papers, box 70.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Murray Wrong, 3 Nov 1920, RT Papers c 811, fols 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> [Curtis,] "Preliminary Note on the Questions Raised . . . ", Jan 1921, Brand Papers, box 41.

<sup>4</sup> See below, pp 307 ff.

was conceived as a longer-term goal. The most striking difference between the prewar *Round Table* and its interwar incarnation was the increased coverage given to international affairs: 17.8% of total coverage before 1914, and 31.5% between 1918 and 1939.<sup>1</sup> As Dove commented in 1928, "we are now to a large extent a foreign affairs review".<sup>2</sup> This was not because the Round Tablers had "gone off" the Empire. As Dove, again, wrote, "the education of Dominion readers in foreign problems is essential for our main purpose. How otherwise can the Dominions advance on the road which we would have them tread?"<sup>3</sup>

Another way in which the Round Tablers hoped to contribute towards the long-term goal was by encouraging the Dominions to work out their own "national" policies with regard to the central questions of international and Imperial affairs. With hindsight, this appears contradictory; to the Round Tablers it certainly did not seem so.

A circular was sent out to the Dominion groups at the end of 1920, calling for "a fresh approach to the central problems of the Empire by the groups of each Dominion on their own initiative (*sic*) and from their own distinctive national standpoint". The "central problems of the Empire" were spelled out: defence, emigration, trade and commerce, mandates, the position of the Dominions in the League, diplomatic relations with Japan and other powers, the "tide of anarchy" flowing from Russia, and the possible breakdown of British rule in Egypt and India.

"In all these questions we believe that the study of national policy will lead of necessity to the Imperial problem, and that this process will throw an increasing

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C, "Round Table Coverage, by Subject".

<sup>2</sup> Dove to Hichens, 5 Dec 1928, Lothian Papers 243, fols 590-94.

<sup>3</sup> Dove to Coupland, 2 March 1923, Brand Papers, box 70.



light upon the central issue in that problem - whether, to wit, Imperial unity is incompatible with the full national development of the Dominions or, on the contrary, essential to it."

The Dominion groups were reminded of the importance of their reaching the latter conclusion. The alternative to Imperial union was not national independence side by side with a British Empire "curtailed in extent but wielding its old influence and power. The alternative is national independence in a world in which the British Empire has ceased to exist".<sup>1</sup>

Finally, it should be emphasised that the Moot saw its original strategy as interrupted rather than altogether abandoned. The idea of reviving the Round Table's programme of "group study" was raised frequently after the war, usually in connection with Curtis. In November 1919, Brand wrote to Kerr, urging him to impress on Curtis the necessity of his returning to his unfinished work, which was "vital to the success of the Round Table as I conceive it", "like a University in a State or like a vital nucleus in a cell".<sup>2</sup> In a similar vein, Dawson described Curtis's work as "the very foundation of the whole Round Table movement".<sup>3</sup> The problem was Curtis himself, and his tendency to serial obsessions. In 1922 it would seem as if his colleagues' arguments temporarily won him over, when he wrote to a friend that "it is up to me to carry on the Round Table and complete the *Commonwealth of Nations*".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Circular to the Dominion groups, 22 Dec 1920, Lothian Papers, 17, fols 16-29. A draft version, dated 21 Dec 1920, is in Brand Papers, box 41.

<sup>2</sup> Brand to Kerr, 17 Nov 1919, Brand Papers, box 42.

<sup>3</sup> Dawson, "Organization and Personnel of the Round Table Office", 14 July 1920, Brand Papers, box 42.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to "Mary", 4 March 1922, Curtis Papers 3, fols 1-4.

The same year, 1922, a more ambitious project presented itself after a "vigorous" discussion of the Round Table's future. The Moot found itself

"... very strongly in favour of an attempt to get American support for a study of world politics upon the basis of our previous work on the Commonwealth nations . . . . What we want to get from sympathetic people in America is,

- 1) the formation of groups who will take our Memorandums [sic], tear them to pieces from the American point of view, send us the criticisms which result & supply us with American Memorandums for treatment in the same way.
- 2) money to keep our work going".<sup>1</sup>

Kerr (who was already in the US at the time of the Moot discussion) set about floating the idea in New York with various contacts including Whitney Shepardson (one of Colonel House's advisers at Versailles) and John W Davis (chief counsel to J P Morgan and Co, and Wilson's ambassador to London). The idea of a French leg was added, "largely to sidetrack the idea that it was an Anglo-Saxon plot". The Moot's American contacts were adamant against any formal Round Table connection, although they were willing "to get a sort of central Moot together" and have Curtis "teach them your method". The Council on Foreign Relations which the Round Table thus helped to galvanise in fact enjoyed more equivalent relations with the Institute of International Affairs than with the Round Table. The latter, as Kerr realised, had to content itself with being "a purely British enquiry".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis was once more employed as a "researcher" from 1924.

Nevertheless, it was not until early in 1929 that the first section of his new *Round Table Studies* was issued (with a preface stating that "the world

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<sup>1</sup> Grigg to Kerr, 6 April 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1000.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 22 April 1922 and 28 May 1922, Lothian Papers 18, fols 186-88 and 189-91.

had so changed, and also my own view of it, that I could not piece a second volume on to the first", ie, *The Commonwealth of Nations*).<sup>1</sup> Other preoccupations once more intervened, however, and it was not until 1934 that Curtis's work was actually published, as the first volume of *Civitas Del.*

### The Moot in the 1920s

Towards the end of 1915 Curtis had written to Milner that, as he saw it, the real value of the Moot was in its "mixed character". An "organisation which consisted exclusively of Olivers . . . would be lost in the Dominions and among the working classes from the outset". One "which consisted of Zimmermans . . . would probably lose touch with hard realities". "Such a combination" Curtis thought "worth holding together".<sup>2</sup> By the early 'twenties, the Moot had lost not only Oliver and Zimmern, but others who had been key figures in the early years, and (some would later claim) it was perhaps in danger of losing Milner himself.

A large part of the problem was the Moot's association with Lloyd George, which proved to be something of a poisoned chalice for the younger Round Tablers. Von Haast urged the New Zealand group to sever its connection with the London Round Table, on the grounds that it had become a mere "mouthpiece" for Lloyd George.<sup>3</sup> While his motion was rejected, suspicion that the London group was no longer "disinterested" remained.

Zimmern's disagreements with the Moot sprang from his attachment to

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<sup>1</sup> [Curtis,] *Round Table Studies, Third Series, Instalment A*, Curtis Papers 157, Item 4, Preface (dated Jan 1929).

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Milner, 29 Nov 1915, Curtis Papers 2, fols 199-201.

<sup>3</sup> J M A Ilott to Dove, 1 May 1923, Brand Papers, box 70.

the ideals of liberal internationalism and concern for the effects of British policy in Europe. He resigned in 1922. In December of that year he described his former colleagues as "subservient to Lloyd George", a charge which Brand found "insulting" and "quite uncalled for".<sup>1</sup> The mutual hubris eventually died down. In 1926 Dove reported Zimmern as "now quite friendly again".<sup>2</sup> Thereafter Zimmern was a useful contact in Geneva and Oxford, and one whose work meshed closely with that of the Round Tablers. Nevertheless, he was not to play any further significant rôle in the Moot.

The Round Table lost more friends on the right wing of British politics. Lord Selborne viewed Lloyd George with intense suspicion following the political crises of 1910-14. As Curtis later wrote, he was "a man whose conservative instincts run very deep", and he found it hard to forgive the younger Round Tablers for their part in what he saw as a betrayal of British interests in India and Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Oliver was another who was never enamoured of Lloyd George. The final straw for Oliver, as for Selborne, was the rôle played by individual Round Tablers in India and Ireland. By 1923 he had decided to resign even as a Trustee, in order not to have "any official connection with an organisation with whose views on several fundamental matters I have the misfortune to disagree".<sup>4</sup>

The departure of others from the Moot was less dramatic. Amery's was perhaps long overdue, considering his failure to make an impact on the

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<sup>1</sup> Brand to Dove, 11 Dec 1922, Brand Papers, box 70. Zimmern contested Carnarvon as a Labour candidate in 1924, on a platform consisting almost entirely of opposition to Lloyd George's foreign policy views. (See his *Election Address*, 1924, copy in Bodleian Library.)

<sup>2</sup> Dove to Kerr, 10 Oct 1926, Lothian Papers 224, fols 340-41.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Baden-Powell, 30 July 1932, Curtis Papers 91, fols 23-24.

<sup>4</sup> Oliver to Dove, 20 Feb 1923, Brand Papers, box 70.



Round Table's views on tariffs and imperial co-operation. As Colonial Secretary from 1924 to 1929, and as Secretary of State for India from 1940 to 1945, Amery sought the advice and collaboration of his former colleagues, but he was by no means a mere conduit for Round Table influence.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Robert Cecil was another ex-Round Tabler who held office in both Lloyd George's government and its Conservative successors. As President of the League of Nations Union, and one of the foremost advocates of disarmament and collective security, Cecil found little support amongst Round Tablers. Dawson believed that Cecil had allied himself with an "impotent set of cranks", and Grigg thought that Cecil himself had become decidedly and unforgiveably "anti-Imperial".<sup>2</sup>

Lord Milner agreed with Zimmern that Lloyd George's conduct at the end of the war was neither statesmanlike nor prescient. Moreover, Milner feared for the Empire, haunted, as he told Oliver, by the example of the "glorious" years 1757-63 being followed by the "melancholy" 1763-83, in which the hero of the former was not entirely blameless.<sup>3</sup>

After his death, Milner's political inheritance was appropriated by his formidable widow (whom he had married in 1921). Lady Milner was a pronounced "diehard", and editor of the *National Review* from 1932 to 1948. Her views clashed with those of the *Round Table* on many issues. In 1936

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<sup>1</sup> Amery's views and political career are the subject of illuminating analysis by Wm Roger Louis, *"In the Name of God, Go!"* (New York, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Dawson to Oliver, 28 June 1928, Oliver Papers 85, fol 16; Grigg to Downie Stewart, 14 Oct 1933, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003. For Cecil's attempts to implement his views, see Dick Richardson, *The Evolution of British Disarmament Policy in the 1920s* (London, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Milner to Oliver, 23 Dec 1918, Oliver Papers 86, fols 67-68.



she published a short article which established the myth that Milner and the younger Round Tablers had disagreed profoundly over the League of Nations.<sup>1</sup> Her political differences with the Moot were accompanied by personal animosity, particularly towards Kerr whom, she claimed, Milner himself had come to mistrust, as he did other "unmanly men".<sup>2</sup>

Milner's authority was also posthumously employed within the Moot. At one point Grigg claimed that in his last years Milner was "deeply concerned about the extent to which the *Round Table* was drifting away from imperial interests".<sup>3</sup> Grigg's claim was made in the context of a particularly heated argument, in which Grigg found himself on the losing side. There appears to be no contemporary evidence of such misgivings on Milner's part. On the contrary, Milner continued to act as the patron of the group and to attend meetings - he had intended to join a Moot discussion on the day of his death<sup>4</sup> - and it was in this postwar period that he contributed his only two articles to the *Round Table* magazine. Both were on Egypt, where Milner himself was responsible for initiating negotiations with the Wafdist leaders. It is by no means clear, therefore, that Milner's views and those of his Round Table colleagues were as discordant as "diehards" (particularly Lady Milner) later claimed.

Although the Moot was smaller in the 1920s than in its prewar days, the question which might reasonably be asked is whether it lost in cohesion

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<sup>1</sup> Viscountess Milner, "What Lord Milner Said", *National Review*, vol 107 (October 1936), pp 445-49; cf V Halpérin, *Lord Milner and the Empire* (London, 1952), pp 200-01, quoting Lady Milner's letter to him of 2 Mar 1946. Milner and the younger Round Tablers in fact made similar assessments of the League.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Milner to Grigg, 23 June 1925, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002.

<sup>3</sup> Grigg to Hitchens, 15 Dec 1931, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.

<sup>4</sup> [Brand,] "Lord Milner", *RT*, June 1925, p 427.

and commitment what it lost in size. The withdrawal or resignation of Oliver, Zimmer and others in many ways emphasised the political and ideological homogeneity of the remaining Round Tablers. It certainly emphasised their social homogeneity.

The "Kindergarten" now constituted a majority of the group, with Curtis, Kerr, Dawson, Brand, Hichens, Malcolm and Dove all remaining closely involved in Round Table affairs.<sup>1</sup> As Sir Olaf Caroe later wrote, there was "something in that association which goes beyond the individual".<sup>2</sup> Of the prewar Moot's non-"Kindergarten" members, only Grigg and Coupland persevered with membership. It is clear that when matters of fundamental importance to the group were discussed, these two carried less weight than their "Kindergarten" colleagues.<sup>3</sup>

Some attempts at widening the membership were made during the 1920s. One of Curtis's Oxford pupils (and an early member of the South African group), Percy Horsfall, was recruited in 1921. An employee first of the English Electric Company (a subdivision of Cammell Laird) and then of Lazard Brothers (of which he was Managing Director from 1937), Horsfall was a man whose "prejudices were few [but] very determined".<sup>4</sup> He remained a member of the Moot until his death in 1965, and wrote many *Round Table* articles on finance and economics, and on British and European politics.

Valdorf (Lord) Astor frequently hosted weekend meetings of the Moot

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<sup>1</sup> Craik attended meetings very infrequently after the war. J G Lockhart had him wondering in 1928 "what a good Tory like himself was doing in such wild company": Janitor, *The Feet of the Young Men* (London, 1928), p 177.

<sup>2</sup> Caroe to Morrah, 14 Dec 1949, (Lothian file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> See, eg, Curtis to the "aboriginal" members, 6 Aug 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fols 627-32.

<sup>4</sup> [Lord Hampden,] "Percy Horsfall", RT, June 1965, pp 207-08.

at Cliveden, and was an important benefactor. Nevertheless, he rarely attended meetings (even when they were held at Cliveden) and was apparently never asked to join the Moot. Loring Christie (a member of Borden's team at Versailles, and an important figure in the early Department of External Affairs) joined the Moot between 1923 and 1926. He fell out with the Moot over Locarno, but rejoined the Canadian Round Table in the late 1920s.<sup>1</sup> Another of Curtis's protégés, Keith Hancock, attended Round Table meetings from 1924 to 1925 and again (after a spell in Adelaide) from 1934 to 1935. Hancock recalled leaving the Moot abruptly, in protest at the foreign policy views held by some of the senior members of the Moot.<sup>2</sup>

With the exception of Dove (who served as editor from 1920 until his death in 1934), none of the Moot was in a position to devote the bulk of his energies and time to Round Table business. Brand, Malcolm and Hichens were established and prominent, but therefore busy, figures in the worlds of finance, commerce and industry. Dawson was again editor of *The Times* from 1923 to 1941. Grigg entered Parliament in 1922; from 1925 to 1930 he served as Governor of Kenya. Coupland resigned as editor in 1919, in order to secure the Beit Professorship, which he held until 1948.

Even Curtis and Kerr were unable or unwilling to make the Round Table the primary object of their labours. From 1921 to 1924 Curtis was employed by the Colonial Office as an adviser on Irish affairs; thereafter, although funded by the Moot, he devoted the greater part of his attention to the

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<sup>1</sup> For the disagreement, see below, pp 321-22.

<sup>2</sup> Hancock, *Country and Calling* (London, 1954), p 181. Hancock recalled the incident as taking place in 1936, but the Round Table minutes show that the last meeting he attended was over the weekend of 19 to 20 Oct 1935, at the height of the Abyssinian crisis. This sheds a rather different light on his claim that "a majority of our meeting accepted the argument that Great Britain had an interest in seeing Hitler established on the Brenner Pass".

(Royal) Institute of International Affairs, and to his - what seemed to his colleagues almost irrational - obsession with China (to which might be added skywriting, ribbon development, the preservation of Oxford, and university politics).

It had been hoped that Kerr would resume the editorship of the *Round Table* once he left Lloyd George's employment<sup>1</sup>, but Kerr soon decided that his commitment to Christian Science "will preclude my taking a whole time job".<sup>2</sup> In fact, Kerr remained an active contributor to both the Moot and the magazine until his death in 1940. Nevertheless Kerr, like Curtis, went off on something of a tangent, entranced by the "much larger idea, the integration of the English-speaking world, [i.e., including America,] also on an organic basis", which he believed was now "within the realm of practical possibilities".<sup>3</sup> As Secretary to the Rhodes Trustees from 1925 to 1939, and Ambassador to Washington from August 1939 to December 1940, Kerr (who inherited the title and estates of Lord Lothian in March 1930) was in a good position to pursue his vision.

While the professional and other preoccupations of the Round Tablers are unarguable, their effect on the group is less clear-cut. Maturity, experience and "the enhanced prestige that achievement brings"<sup>4</sup> ensured that the contribution which individual Round Tablers could make was, if quantitatively diminished, qualitatively more valuable. Within the Moot could be found experts and power-brokers from a wide variety of fields,

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<sup>1</sup> See, eg, Curtis to Hichens, Brand, Kerr and Dawson, 3 Oct 1919, Lothian Papers 491, fol 2.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 28 May 1922, Lothian Papers 18, fols 189-91.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 26 May 1927, Lothian Papers 227, fols 155-58.

<sup>4</sup> John Dove, "The Round Table: A Mystery Probed", 18 Dec 1924, Brand Papers, box 70.



each with access to widening circles of potential collaborators. The Round Table undoubtedly benefited.

Moreover, the diversification of Round Tablers' interests did not in itself indicate the disintegration of the group, or disenchantment with its motive ideals. Indeed, it is remarkable how often Round Tablers rationalised their individual interests in terms of the common Round Table good. This was, of course, most often the case with the "Kindergarten" members, and especially Curtis, but it was also true of others in the Moot. Coupland saw his move to the Beit Professorship as being "both in my own interests and those of the Round Table"<sup>1</sup> while Grigg entered Parliament as a "lonely pioneer of the unborn Round Table Group".<sup>2</sup> Individual Round Tablers certainly acted idiosyncratically and without the backing of the wider Moot. Nevertheless, Round Table membership continued to be a vital and invigorating element in its members' contributions to public life: "something larger than friendship and nobler than day-to-day politics or business".<sup>3</sup>

#### The Moot and British Politics

Lloyd George's premiership was a turning-point for many of the younger Round Tablers. The Conservative backlash in 1922 launched the political career of Grigg, the only Round Tabler to become an MP during the interwar period. The anti-Coalitionists' ascendancy at the Carlton Club prompted him to write to Nancy Astor:

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<sup>1</sup> Coupland to Kerr, 13 March 1919, Lothian Papers 487, fol 2.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Sir Abe Bailey, 28 Oct 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999.

<sup>3</sup> Hodson, "The Round Table's Early Life", *RT*, Oct 1976, p 420.



"After all that has passed there is for me a profound moral division between such people and any leaders that I can serve. I am going down to Bob[Brand]'s today to suggest to the Round Table that they should definitely . . . throw in their lot as independent men behind Lloyd George".<sup>1</sup>

Grigg got the support he wanted. Brand, Kerr and Hichens spoke on his behalf in Oldham, the Round Table office provided useful "facts and figures", and Abe Bailey was persuaded by Curtis to provide £1000 for Grigg's "fighting fund".<sup>2</sup> Once in Parliament, Grigg realised "the justice of the instinct which made me feel that it was now or never if we were to tackle Parliament"; he was "only sorry that there are no other Round tablers in with me at the moment".<sup>3</sup>

At the time of Grigg's election, Kerr wrote to his mother that "I don't feel that he is much of a Liberal".<sup>4</sup> Grigg's later career proved the truth of this remark. He was on the point of breaking up the Liberal Party's new-found unity in 1925 when Amery despatched him to Kenya as Governor. Back in England in 1930 he was active in trying to form a group of "Liberal Unionists" to assist in a realignment of the Right. Pre-empted by the formation of the National Government, he again spent much of the 1930s intriguing against the lacklustre and Imperially illiterate party leaderships. Grigg's parliamentary career appears marginal and almost bizarre; it derived a certain consistency, however, from his fervent Imperialism. As he explained to Bailey, what he was really after was a

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<sup>1</sup> Grigg to Nancy Astor, 21 Sept 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Handley to Grigg, 28 Oct 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1000; Grigg to Bailey, 28 Oct 1922, MSS Microfilm 999. Bailey again funded Grigg's election in 1923.

<sup>3</sup> Grigg to Bailey, 23 Nov 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999.

<sup>4</sup> Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 19 Nov 1922, Lothian Papers 467, fol 30.

"same" alignment of forces: "Empire" mobilised against "Socialism".<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, he wrote to Milner that if "we fail to make the whole Liberal Party understand the Empire, it will end by adding an enormous strength to the Socialists on their international and unBritish way of thought".<sup>2</sup>

Kerr was offered a Unionist candidacy in 1922, but turned it down because "I don't think the old associations would approve of my views at all"; he again resisted pressure from Lloyd George and Herbert Samuel in 1928, this time on the grounds that he would not wish to drop his Rhodes Trust work.<sup>3</sup> He was probably wise: Dawson thought him "one of the worst politicians in the world".<sup>4</sup> Kerr's involvement in Liberal politics was nevertheless close, and more consistent than that of Grigg. He was one of the leading Liberal spokesmen on Imperial and international affairs throughout the interwar years, and, after inheriting a seat in the Lords in 1930, briefly served the National Government as Under-Secretary of State for India. He resigned as a result of the Ottawa agreements.

As editor of *The Times*, Dawson maintained a certain impartiality, although he himself was both temperamentally and by conviction a Conservative. Perhaps his proudest moment came when he managed to keep *The Times* going through the General Strike of 1926. Nevertheless, Dawson, like Oliver (with whom he maintained a close friendship), was an exponent and admirer of *realpolitik*. Consequently he was less moved by "anti-socialism"

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<sup>1</sup> Grigg to Bailey, 24 Feb 1924, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1001.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Milner, 20 Nov 1923, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1001.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 3 Oct 1922, Lothian Papers 467, fol 26; Kerr to Lloyd George, 7 May 1928, Lothian Papers 229, fol 352.

<sup>4</sup> Dawson to Oliver, 29 Sept 1931, Oliver Papers 85, fol 230.

than Grigg or even Kerr, believing in 1923, for instance, that it was much better to let Labour in and make a "botch" than to polarise politics by creating an artificial alliance to keep Labour out.<sup>1</sup>

Dawson's contacts were wide-ranging, and he was the only Round Tabler with continuous access to the leading politicians of the day (including Baldwin, Halifax, MacDonald and Neville Chamberlain). It is tempting to picture Dawson exercising "power without responsibility" by means of his backstairs influence.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it is important not to over-estimate the extent to which he was able, or indeed willing, to pursue his own agenda. After Dawson's retirement, Walter Monckton paid tribute to him precisely because of his "disinterested advice - without what we ex-lawyers call any 'indirect motive'".<sup>3</sup>

Other Round Tablers had more specialised interests in politics, and consequently fewer contacts at the higher levels of British statecraft. Brand, like Grigg and Kerr, was predominantly aligned to the Liberals, joining Keynes in a series of Liberal think-tanks which produced Lloyd George's policy books. (Unlike Keynes, Brand was an old-fashioned free-trader, and a firm supporter of Montagu Norman and the gold standard.) Brand's own expertise was recognised by politicians in other parties: he was a member of the Macmillan Committee appointed by Snowden in 1929, and he was an influence on the early financial policy of the National

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<sup>1</sup> Dawson to Oliver, 23 Dec 1923, Oliver Papers 84, fols 113-14.

<sup>2</sup> J E Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (London, 1955) lists a number of occasions when *The Times* advocated a policy subsequently adopted by the government.

<sup>3</sup> Monckton to Dawson, 21 July 1941, Dawson Papers 82, fol 22.

Government.<sup>1</sup> Hitchens' main concern was with "Industrial Fellowship" and similar Christian initiatives in the field of industrial relations, a concern which did not easily translate into politics at the conventional level. Curtis's range of contacts largely centred on academics and officials; All Souls and a number of his more politically-minded pupils (notably Malcolm MacDonald) provided his main contacts in party politics.

The younger Round Tablers appreciated less clearly than Milner the need to build working-class support for the Empire<sup>2</sup>: their contacts in the Labour Party (excluding the National Labourites in the 1930s) and in the Trade Unions were almost non-existent, and there appears to have been no significant attempt to rectify this situation. Instead, many Round Tablers clung to a naive belief in the extent of imperial patriotism amongst their fellow countrymen. It was left to more experienced and astute politicians to point out the truth, as when Neville Chamberlain deflated Grigg's hopes of a Liberal/Conservative alliance based on Empire:

"The people of this country have a deep sentiment about the Empire, but it is remote from their ordinary thoughts. What they are really concerned about is their bread and butter; and though, when it is explained to them, they are quite ready to appreciate that their bread and butter is largely provided by Imperial trade . . . their eyes are fixed on the factories at home, and overseas is out of the world to them".<sup>3</sup>

Grigg himself saw more clearly than other Round Tablers the domestic uses to which Empire could be put - as when he believed that "only very serious

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<sup>1</sup> See Robert V D Boyce, *British Capitalism at the Crossroads* (Cambridge, 1987), pp 26 and *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> See J O Stubbs, "Lord Milner and Patriotic Labour, 1914-1918", *BHR*, Vol 87 (1982), pp 717-54.

<sup>3</sup> Neville Chamberlain to Grigg, 30 Sept 1931, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.



trouble in India" might discredit the Labour Government in 1930, or when he urged that only the "exploitation" of the Empire's resources could provide an effective counter to the assaults on "economic privilege" by the "underprivileged".<sup>1</sup> Others in the Moot were more concerned with Empire as international duty than as national asset.

One concern which united all Round Tablers was the need for stability and continuity in Imperial policy. The Round Table's attitude to specific problems was thoroughly conditioned by this need, whether it was a case of establishing a policy in India or East Africa to which Labour as well as Conservatives could subscribe, or of facilitating an Imperial foreign policy which would keep the Dominions in line with Britain. This concern was met less by direct pressure on politicians (which the Round Tablers were ill-equipped to attempt) than by a concerted and steady pressure at the level which Round Tablers thought more decisive: that of public opinion, determined above all by information and expertise.

#### Information and Expertise

The *Round Table* magazine was only one of a number of interlocking media through which Round Tablers, individually and in combination, sought to influence public opinion. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that the range of the Moot's influence was greater during the interwar period than the prewar.

As editor of *The Times*, Dawson was the premier newspaperman in Britain. Reinstated by a sympathetic consortium orchestrated by Brand,

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<sup>1</sup> Grigg to Neville Chamberlain, 26 May 1930, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002; Grigg, "The British Empire, the League of Nations and the Rhodes Ideal", (sent to Lothian 28 Sept 1932), Lothian Papers 268, fols 753-89.



Dawson was free to pursue what to him was evidently not a contradictory policy of "reflecting and guiding public opinion".<sup>1</sup> His surviving correspondence indicates the importance he attached to obtaining Dominion and Empire correspondents suitably imbued with his own Imperial ideas - the Canadian Round Tabler J A Stevenson was one who benefited. Regular Empire Day supplements were issued, often taking the opportunity to reaffirm Milner's vision of the Empire as "the most powerful bulwark . . . against the spread of international discord".<sup>2</sup>

Although by no means a mere tool in the hands of others in the Moot, Dawson saw that his colleagues enjoyed a privileged access to the letter pages of his paper, and Kerr wrote a number of articles under the pseudonym "Voyageur". They in turn kept Dawson on his feet, complaining vociferously whenever they thought a *Times* article or leader failed to show the "true inwardness" of a point.<sup>3</sup>

Round Tablers, particularly Kerr and Grigg, were prolific journalists, and their contributions became a feature of many publications other than *The Times*. Kerr wrote a regular column for the *Christian Science Monitor*, as well as numerous articles for *The Spectator*, the *Nation and Athenaeum* and the *Contemporary Review*. Grigg often wrote for the more right-wing *National and Fortnightly Reviews*, as well as for J L Garvin's *Observer*. *International Conciliation*, a magazine financed and published by J P Morgan

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<sup>1</sup> A L Kennedy, "Geoffrey Dawson", *Quarterly Review*, vol 294 (April 1956), pp 155-68.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times Supplement*, 24 May 1934. For Dawson and *The Times*, see *The History of the Times*, Vol IV (2 parts, London, 1952) and Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and our Times* (London, 1955).

<sup>3</sup> See, eg, Kerr to Dawson, 13 Nov 1925, Lothian Papers 222, fol 120 (on the Australian elections); on this occasion Dawson agreed.

and Co, reprinted whole articles from the *Round Table*, as well as *Times* editorials and fresh articles by individual Round Tablers (particularly Brand and Kerr). Also in America, a connection through Shepardson with the Williamstown Institute of Politics - "a real thinking machine on foreign affairs" - resulted in the delivery and subsequent publication of lectures by Kerr and Curtis in 1922, Kerr in 1923 and Grigg in 1924. (Further lectures were given by the Round Table's allies Lord Eustace Percy in 1929 and Lord Keston in 1930.) These added to the numerous books and pamphlets published by Round Tablers between the wars. Mention should also be made of Reuters news agency of which Malcolm and Grigg, alongside John Buchan and Sir Roderick Jones, were directors; Buchan made clear the need for someone with "your point of view" when inviting Grigg to take up the post.<sup>2</sup>

As Beit Professor at Oxford, Coupland saw himself, somewhat bizarrely, as "not so much . . . a person as a vehicle of Imperial work".<sup>3</sup> His inaugural lecture could almost have been written by Curtis. "Politics is a science as much as an art", he declared;

"and we cannot with impunity omit to look afield and ahead, to detect the crucial problem . . . before the crisis is upon us, and to prepare ourselves betimes to solve it by scientific study".

As examples of successful "scientific" pre-emption, Coupland chose Alexander Hamilton's federalism and the union of South Africa.<sup>4</sup> In his historical writings, Coupland was particularly concerned to emphasise the

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Tom Jones, Aug 1922 (copy), Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999.

<sup>2</sup> Buchan to Grigg, 9 Feb 1923, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1000.

<sup>3</sup> Coupland to Kerr, 15 Dec 1928, Lothian Papers 239, fols 153-58.

<sup>4</sup> Coupland, *The Empire in These Days* (London, 1935), p 10 and ff.

missionary and humanitarian aspects of Empire. His *American Revolution and the British Empire* of 1930 claimed that the British Empire had been revolutionised in 1775-93 by "colonial assimilation", anti-mercantilism, anti-slavery and trusteeship. He hoped that this volume would help Americans in particular to "begin to look at [the Empire] from a new angle", which was indeed "why I wrote the book".<sup>1</sup> Despite protests from Curtis that he was already "one of the most fortunate people in the University of Oxford", Coupland's work was speeded by a Round Table grant of £400 pa.<sup>2</sup>

Oxford connections had always been important as a basis for Round Table activities; between the wars, they became even more so. Indeed, the "London" Moot came increasingly to resemble an "Oxford" one, with Oxford providing not only a spiritual and in many cases geographical home, but employment, ready sources of information and expertise, and a likely (if largely infertile) ground for the exercise of Imperial imagination.

Dawson's *Times* was once dubbed "the All Souls Parish Magazine".<sup>3</sup> The description could perhaps more aptly be attached to the *Round Table*. Brand, Malcolm and Dawson were already fellows of All Souls, "and constantly there".<sup>4</sup> In 1920 they were joined *ex officio* by Coupland. The following year, despite the fact that even his friends recognised that his

<sup>1</sup> Coupland to Kerr, [1930,] Lothian Papers 247, fol 110.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Kerr, 25 Nov 1928, Lothian Papers 239, fols 147-50; Minutes of RT meetings, 16 July, 31 July and 17 Oct 1929, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> C Hobhouse, *Oxford As It Was and As It Is Today* (London, 1939), p 18. "The duty of purveying honest news is elevated in their eyes into the prerogative of dictating opinion", Hobhouse claimed.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Sir Arthur Salter, 17 April 1930, Lothian Papers 251, fol 599.

"fervour was stronger than his scholarship", Curtis was elected to a fellowship. Kerr, Hichens and Dove were also often there.<sup>2</sup> For Curtis, at least, All Souls provided academic credibility which otherwise he would have found hard to acquire. The All Souls "mystique", as a "committee for running or helping to run the British Empire", was no doubt important also in adding stature to his colleagues.<sup>3</sup>

The All Souls connection had other, more definite, uses. It provided the Round Table with a number of helpers and new members. It also provided a number of experts who were willing to look at *Round Table* articles, as when Professors Brierly and Holdsworth vetted Cyril Asquith's "The Prerogative of Dissolution" for the December 1929 issue.<sup>4</sup> Finally, it provided an ideal setting in which to buttonhole both visitors and the College's more prominent fellows, who included Amery, Sir John Simon, Lords Chelmsford, Curzon and Irwin/Halifax, and Archbishop Lang.

Another Oxford vehicle for the Round Table's influence was the Rhodes Trust. At one point Curtis was considered as a possible Trustee, but, as the Master of Balliol observed, "perhaps, great man as he is, he may be too prophetic".<sup>5</sup> Dawson was in fact the only "Kindergarten" member to be made a Trustee; but with other Trustees including Amery, H A L Fisher (former tutor to many Round Tablers) and Sir Edward Peacock (a former Canadian

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, "Lionel Curtis", RT, March 1956, p 105. Curtis's fellowship was "an early dream" and "his greatest joy": Canon D M M Bartlett to Morrah, 5 June 1962, RT Papers c 868, fol 6.

<sup>2</sup> Rowse, *Glimpses of the Great* (2nd edn, London, 1986), p 350.

<sup>3</sup> [C V Brodribb,] *Government by Mallardry* (London, 1932), Dawson Papers, box 80; cf Louis, *In the Name of God, Go!* (New York, 1992), pp 35-39.

<sup>4</sup> Kerr to Asquith, 18 Oct 1929, and Malcolm to Kerr, 26 Oct 1929, Lothian Papers 237, fols 300-05 and 312-14.

<sup>5</sup> A L Smith to Milner, 13 Aug 1918, Milner Papers 471, fols 224-5.



Round Tabler), the Rhodes Trustees could be counted on to be broadly sympathetic to Round Table influence. More importantly, the Round Table provided three successive General Secretaries, Dawson (1921-2), Grigg (1922-5) and Kerr (1925-40). The latter's appointment was not universally welcomed, causing Kipling's resignation and protests from Lady Milner.<sup>1</sup>

One of Kerr's more fruitful innovations was the introduction of travelling Fellowships. The future Round Tabler John Maud was one who benefited; Margery Perham was another. Her case revealed the limits of influence by enablement, however. Shocked by the attitudes of white settlers in East Africa, she wrote a series of *Times* articles pleading the case for African interests. Grigg was enraged, and tried to get the Trust to withdraw her Fellowship. Kerr/Lothian was unhelpful.<sup>2</sup> On this occasion, Grigg decided against attempting to rebut Perham's views publicly: "it could only weaken such authority as I have . . . if I am constantly appearing in public controversy with people of little or no importance like her".<sup>3</sup> Grigg's decision was perhaps wise: Curtis's controversy with Perham four years later was one from which, it was generally agreed, Perham emerged the victor.<sup>4</sup>

Curtis once wrote to Kerr that "there is a dangerous impression growing that if people want to learn, they had better go to Cambridge

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<sup>1</sup> For the Rhodes Trust generally, see R Symonds, *Oxford and Empire* (Oxford edn, 1991), pp 161 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Lothian, 14 Sept 1931; Lothian to Grigg, 30 Sept 1931, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.

<sup>3</sup> Grigg to M Ridley, 14 Sept 1931, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.

<sup>4</sup> See below, pp 285-86.



rather than Oxford".<sup>1</sup> To reverse this unfortunate trend, Curtis, Kerr, Coupland, Brand and Hichens formed themselves, in various combinations, into numerous committees and ginger groups, enlisting the help of such friends as H A L Fisher, V G S Adams, A D Lindsay and Professor Brierly. Amongst their proposals was a new magazine for Oxford graduates, aimed at raising funds for the Bodleian and other University facilities.<sup>2</sup> More significant, perhaps, were their plans for some new institute to signify and embody Oxford's connection with the Empire.

The earliest version of such a proposal envisaged a new research institute based at All Souls, whose fellows would study such subjects as the international economy, migration and "the colour problem". The work would be entirely postgraduate, and kept deliberately small, but "scientific study" would be undertaken in order to facilitate "political action".<sup>3</sup> As the proposal evolved, Kerr conceived the idea of basing the proposed institute at Rhodes House, where its purposes could be widened to include the instruction of Rhodes Scholars, ICS and Colonial Service probationers. Dawson was enlisted to support Kerr's scheme.<sup>4</sup> Brand and Coupland both warned of the danger that the All Souls and Rhodes House schemes might kill each other off.<sup>5</sup> Kerr was therefore persuaded to limit the latter to problems of "colour"; Smuts, who was brought over to deliver the 1929 Rhodes Lectures and to "fall in with" Kerr's scheme, persuaded him

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Kerr, 31 July 1926. Lothian Papers 221, fols 42-44.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, Memorandum for Hebdomadal Council, Nov 1930, Lothian Papers 244, fols 134-39.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Abraham Flexner, 13 May 1926, Lothian Papers 222, fols 160-69.

<sup>4</sup> Kerr to Dawson, 11 June 1928, Lothian Papers 228, fol 203.

<sup>5</sup> Brand to Kerr, 6 Oct 1929, Lothian Papers 236, fol 273; Coupland to Kerr, 11 Nov 1929, Lothian Papers 234, fol 75.

to limit it further to Africa. In this form, Smuts gave a hearty endorsement to the scheme both in his Lectures and at a special conference to bring together "African experts" and "people in Oxford whom it is important to interest in African problems". He also promised to find £10,000 to launch the new institute.<sup>1</sup>

Discussions of both the "All Souls Project" and the "Smuts House" scheme rumbled on, but got little further. The problem was money. Smuts failed to make good his promise, while the Rockefeller Foundation decided to direct its largesse elsewhere. A similar fate befell plans for a new "Irwin House", with which Curtis and Kerr/Lothian hoped to galvanise Indian studies in Oxford. In this case the intended beneficiaries were not British policy-makers but Indians themselves. Again, however, the problem was money. Lothian appears finally to have given up in 1936, when he persuaded the Rhodes Trustees to support the new Social Studies faculty, on condition that it include within its remit the study of government in the Empire.<sup>2</sup>

#### Chatham House

No survey of the Round Tablers' rôle in the dissemination of information and expertise would be complete without mention of the (Royal) Institute of International Affairs. The Institute had its origins in a series of meetings at the Hotels Majestic and Crillon in Paris in the summer of 1919. There, members of the British delegation and press at

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr to Coupland, 6 Nov 1929, Lothian Papers 234, fol 73; Coupland to Kerr, 29 Jan 1930, Lothian Papers 239, fol 176.

<sup>2</sup> R Symonds, *Oxford and Empire* (Oxford edn, 1991), p 170. For "Smuts House", see *ibid*, pp 173-78, and for "Irwin House", *ibid*, pp 116-18.

Versailles (including Curtis, Kerr, Dawson, Cecil, Lord Eustace Percy, G M Gathorne-Hardy, J W Headlam-Morley, Clement Jones and Harold Temperley) met with their American counterparts (including Shepardson, Beer, James T Slotwell, Archibald Cary Coolidge, and Thomas V Lamont) and agreed to work for the creation of Institutes in each country, "which would act as a telephone exchange between the few hundred men in each country who administer foreign affairs and create public opinion on the subject".<sup>1</sup>

Back in England, it was Curtis who was the real "father" of the new Institute, as Gathorne-Hardy later emphasised.<sup>2</sup> Joint Honorary Secretary with the latter between 1920 and 1930 (resigning to prevent the Institute being seen as a "one-man show"<sup>3</sup>), Councillor from 1934, and President from 1944, Curtis it was who organised the preliminary meetings (which took place at the Round Table office), drew up lists of possible members, secured from Bailey the initial finance, and drafted the constitution.

Contemporary accounts link the Institute with the creation of the League of Nations.<sup>4</sup> Curtis, however, saw it in Imperial terms. Like other members of the Round Table, Curtis was never more than lukewarm towards the League. Indeed, he regarded it as "a scaffolding . . . plastered with phrases", all the more dangerous because by its existence it deluded opinion in Britain and the Dominions as to the true nature of international affairs.<sup>5</sup> Chatham House was in fact the outcome partly of Curtis's

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<sup>1</sup> "George Louis Beer", *RT*, Sept 1920, p 935.

<sup>2</sup> G M Gathorne-Hardy, *Lionel Curtis, CH, 1872-1955* (London, 1955), p 1.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Jerome D Greene, 20 Sept 1930, Curtis Papers 3, fols 212-15.

<sup>4</sup> See, eg, Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919* (London, 1933), pp 352-53.

<sup>5</sup> [Curtis,] "Windows of Freedom", *RT*, Dec 1918 (pp 1-47), p 25.

hostility to the League, his recognition of the need to inform and educate public opinion, and what Elie Kedourie has pertinently described as a "hopeful theory about the relation between knowledge and action".<sup>1</sup>

Curtis envisaged a "postgraduate" Institute for "definite study and research", with a library and other facilities, publishing books and papers, and generally contributing to the formation of "sound" opinion. Equally importantly, the Institute would play host to closed meetings, where "men of theory" could meet with "men of practice", so that academics and specialists could trade insights with officials and politicians in an atmosphere of mutual enrichment. As well as a free-standing Institute in America - which, as has been seen, was finally jolted into existence by Round Tablers in 1922 - Curtis was concerned

"to get Branches of the Institute in the Dominions because such branches will at once find themselves directly depending for a supply of material and information on the London Branch, and a new and most important Imperial link will thus be created. In so far as we can get leading publicists in each of the Dominions to study foreign affairs in the true sense of the word, they will come to realise the vital necessity of Imperial Union".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's creation enjoyed a remarkable and swift success. Its inaugural meeting in July 1920, at which Hankey delivered a paper on "Diplomacy by Conference" (published in the September issue of the *Round Table*), was attended by some 300 people. By 1922 the membership was 714, swelling to 1707 in 1929 and 2414 in 1936.<sup>3</sup>

Funding for the Institute came from a variety of sources, including

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- 1 Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version* (London, 1970), p 352.
  - 2 Curtis to Brand, 1 Dec 1919, Brand Papers, box 39.
  - 3 Stephen King-Hall, *Chatham House: A Brief Account* (London, 1937), p 24.



Curtis's friends Lord Astor, Sir John Power and Sir Henry Price. The two most generous benefactors were Abe Bailey and Col R W Leonard. As well as the initial finance, Bailey provided £5000 pa from 1928, emphasising in his letter offering the gift that the Institute's work was "vital to the present needs of the British Commonwealth", because "to preserve its unity under the Crown, its peoples as well as its governments must learn how to handle their foreign relations together".<sup>1</sup> Leonard gave Chatham House to the Institute. In his speech inaugurating the building, he declared that "to us the British Empire is the greatest of human achievements. To serve it rightly is to serve mankind".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis had hoped that the overseas Round Table groups might be persuaded to form themselves into local branches of the Institute. Here, however, the other London Round Tablers disagreed. In their view, the local groups performed a useful function, while the Institute's value was as yet untested.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the links between Dominion groups and the local branches of the Institute were close. Nearly all of the original Dominion members of the Institute were also Round Tablers, and the latter often took the initiative in founding local Institutes. In Australia, the creation of the local Institute was largely the work of Eggleston, Sir Thomas Bavin and H S Nicholas; in New Zealand, of Downie Stewart and A R Atkinson; in South Africa, of E A Walker.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bailey to Prince of Wales [1928], Lothian Papers 244, fol 665.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by S C Leslie, "British Attitudes to the Commonwealth", RT, July 1973, p 369.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Brand, 1 Dec 1919, and Brand to Curtis, 5 Dec 1919, Brand Papers, box 39.

<sup>4</sup> "List of Names of those who are invited to become Original members . . .", [1919/20], Brand Papers, box 39; King-Hall, *op cit*, pp 67 ff; see also Foster, *High Hopes* (Melbourne, 1986), pp 56-57 and *passim*.



Curtis's belief that the local Institutes would be led to grasp the necessity of Imperial union was, of course, over-optimistic; but his view of the Institutes as an "important Imperial link" was perhaps not. Members of the various Institutes enjoyed reciprocal membership rights in other parts of the Empire and meetings were often organised at Chatham House to be addressed by visiting Dominion nationals.

Alongside Toynbee's annual *Surveys of International Affairs*, the Institute fostered many works of Imperial relevance. Funds from the Carnegie Trust (of which Hitchens was UK representative) enabled Hancock to publish the first *Surveys of Commonwealth Affairs*. Hugh Wyndham published three volumes in the lesser-known "Problems of Imperial Trusteeship" series. Hailey's magisterial *African Survey* was also published under RIIA auspices. The RIIA was precluded by its Charter from expressing corporate opinions; nevertheless, Curtis himself was able to publish his *Capital Question of China* as the "common result" of an RIIA study group.<sup>1</sup> Of nine such groups in existence in 1936, four (on Empire relations, the Colonial Question, Imperial Trusteeship and Empire Trade) were directly Imperial in theme.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, mention should be made of the series of Commonwealth Relations Conferences organised by Chatham House and its sister Institutes. The purpose of these was, in the words of a Chatham House official, "to bring into the open those . . . problems of the Commonwealth which do not emerge (at any rate in public) at full-dress Imperial Conferences".<sup>3</sup> If bringing problems into the open was one purpose, another was to discuss

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, *The Capital Question of China* (London, 1932), Preface.

<sup>2</sup> King-Hall, *op. cit.*, pp 114 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p 75.

solutions and provide reassurance. The 1933 Conference, for instance, suggested a number of improvements in the machinery for Imperial co-operation, and ended in the "unanimous belief . . . that the British Commonwealth ought to endure, and that it would in fact continue to hold its place among the Powers of the World".<sup>1</sup>

In 1930 Curtis wrote that his aim in founding the Institute had been "to embody as much of our Round Table movement as possible in a permanent institution". In the same breath, however, he complained that this had not been done "as I could have wished by the Moot as the Moot".<sup>2</sup> There was some truth in his complaint. All the Round Tablers were founding members of the Institute, attended meetings frequently, and spoke perhaps more than their fair share. Nevertheless, none was as enthusiastic as Curtis. Brand agreed to act as first Treasurer of the Institute, but only reluctantly, as "it would not be possible to let anything get in the way of" the Round Table.<sup>3</sup> Another worry was the Institute's journal. It was thought that few people would take both magazines, and that there would inevitably be competition for qualified writers.<sup>4</sup> Finally, there was Curtis himself, who was funded (with difficulty) by the Round Table, but appeared to spend all his time furthering the work of the institute. As Dove remarked, "this latter thing is all right. But Lionel's first love has still to be won, and unless he returns to it, we shall all be the losers".<sup>5</sup>

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1 [Hodson,] "British Commonwealth Relations", *RT*, Dec 1933 (pp 42-61), p 43.

2 Curtis to Hichens, Dawson, Brand and Lothian, 6 Aug 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fols 627-32.

3 Brand to Curtis, 5 Dec 1919, Brand Papers, box 39.

4 Dove to Hichens, 5 Dec 1928, Lothian Papers 243, fols 590-94.

5 Brand (ed), *The Letters of John Dove* (London, 1938), p 321.

New Recruits: the Moot in the 1930s

Curtis was 58 in 1930 and, with the exception of Kerr, Coupland and Horsfall, all the other Round Tablers were in their 50s. Without the introduction of "young blood" there was a real prospect of "the petering out of the magazine", which was "the thing we most wish to avoid".<sup>1</sup>

Other considerations, too, recommended a broadening of the Moot. The Dominion groups were now languishing under the weight of a good deal of neglect. The task set by the Moot, to study a range of questions which would confront the Dominions were they "outside" the Empire, was criticised by the New Zealand members as distinctly "nebulous".<sup>2</sup> In 1932 Eggleston suggested that the Dominion committees be allowed to revive themselves by providing an expanded quota of the *Round Table*, including more opinionated articles. There was now "no mutuality, no exchange", he complained, and the *Round Table* had become merely a "British Review with appendices". Meanwhile, "the Empire is disintegrating in the same mood of absence of mind as that in which it was built up". The Moot's response was again to suggest "that we cannot do better than return to our old method of group study".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, as Dove emphasised, it was necessary to be sure "that, if the work is taken up, it should be carried to completion".<sup>4</sup>

A decade of "marking time" had also resulted in a weakening of the sense of purpose of the London Moot, hardening divergent interests into

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- 1 Curtis to Sir Arthur Salter, 17 April 1930, Lothian Papers 251, fols 596-99.
  - 2 J M A Ilott to Dove, 10 May 1927, Lothian Papers 20, fols 413-14.
  - 3 F V Eggleston to T H Laby (copy), 1 April 1932, Lothian Papers 267, fols 677-84; Dove to Laby, 16 June 1932, Lothian Papers 267, fols 718-21.
  - 4 Dove, "Decision with regard to Imperial problem" (sent 19 June 1932), Lothian Papers 267, fols 722-24.

something approaching irreconcilable obsessions. Curtis now believed that China was the storm-centre of world politics, both as the greatest challenge to international stability and as the means by which the Dominions would be brought to realise the necessity of imperial federation. Lothian, on the other hand, had "frankly abandoned [his] belief in the possibility at any time of constitutional union" for the Empire alone, and was now convinced that only if the United States were included in the equation could the security of the Empire be maintained.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, Grigg was obsessed with the problems of the settlers in Kenya, and was particularly bitter about the lack of support he found amongst the Moot.

In August 1931 Dove's drastic emendations to an article by Grigg sparked off a furious series of letters to other members of the Moot. To Brand he declared that "if we do not bring the Round Table back to its Imperial mission it will soon be nothing but a subsidiary and washy branch of the Institute of International Affairs."<sup>2</sup> A similar letter to Hichens at the end of the year elicited the confession "that your criticisms are just".

"But I don't think we ought to give it up . . . .  
 (T)here is nothing at present to take the place of the  
 Round Table and do the work that it set out to do. As  
 a magazine I think it is first class and it has a  
 great reputation . . . . What we want is, if  
 possible, to steer it back on to the old lines. And  
 there we get back to our root difficulty. How can the  
 Round Table committee be so reconstituted as to carry  
 out this work?"<sup>3</sup>

Grigg's feelings were eventually assuaged, and an answer found to Hichens' question: that "a group of younger men" should be collected, "so that we

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<sup>1</sup> Dove to Coupland, 2 March 1923, Brand Papers, box 70.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Brand, 6 Aug 1931, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.

<sup>3</sup> Hichens to Grigg, 22 Dec 1931, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.



could campaign again on the old lines".<sup>1</sup> It is clear, then, that great hopes were invested in the recruitment of younger members.

Three new recruits were added to the Moot in 1930-31: (Sir) Harold Butler, (Sir) Ivison Macadam and H V Hodson.<sup>2</sup> Butler was a fellow of All Souls and deputy director (from 1932 director) of the International Labour Office. He provided a number of *Round Table* articles between 1926 and 1932, and was an undoubted influence on the *Round Table's* European and economic coverage. Nevertheless, his commitments in Geneva prevented him from attending meetings on a regular basis, and he dropped out of the Moot after 1934.

Macadam was one of the few Round Tablers educated at Cambridge. After wartime service with the Royal Engineers and a spell organising the National Union of Students he joined Chatham House, serving as secretary and later director general, from 1929 to 1955. Hodson recalled him as a "strong practical man", "reliable" but "enthusiastic", "passionately loyal to his country, his causes and his friends".<sup>3</sup> He joined the Moot in 1931, and was an active member until his death in 1974.

Hodson was another long-term contributor, joining the Moot in 1930 and remaining actively involved ever since. The youngest of the new recruits (just 24 in 1930), Hodson was another fellow of All Souls, elected in 1928. After a brief stint with the Economic Advisory Council (and serving as secretary of the Oxford Enquiry Society), Hodson was appointed

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<sup>1</sup> Grigg to Downie Stewart, 14 Oct 1933, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Arthur (later Lord) Salter, then an official with the League of Nations, was invited to join, but various commitments (including a series of missions to China) prevented him from doing so.

<sup>3</sup> Hodson, "Sir Ivison Macadam", *FT*, April 1975, pp 221-22.



assistant editor of the *Round Table* in 1931, and was funded to undertake an extensive tour of the Empire. In 1934 he succeeded Dove as editor, a position which he held until 1939. After the war he became assistant editor then editor of *The Sunday Times*, and in 1961 the first Provost of Ditchley (the Anglo-American "think-tank").

In 1934 Macadam and Hodson were joined by three further recruits, Malcolm Macdonald, John (Lord Redcliffe-) Maud and J H Penson. Macdonald, the son of the Prime Minister, was himself a junior minister at the Dominions Office. He resigned from the Moot following his appointment as Dominions Secretary in 1935, but he remained in close contact with Curtis, Macadam and other Round Tablers. Penson (a member of the Cabinet Secretariat) was also only briefly a Round Tabler: he was appointed one of the Newfoundland Commissioners early in 1937.

Maud was a young fellow of University College, Oxford, whose interest in local government and the Empire was stimulated by the award of a Rhodes Travelling Fellowship in 1932, which enabled him to study Curtis's legacy in Johannesburg.<sup>1</sup> Maud went on to become Tutor to the Colonial Administrative Services course in 1937-39, followed by a long period in government service which included four years in South Africa as the last British High Commissioner and the first British Ambassador. He was rewarded with a life peerage in 1967. He remained a member of the Moot until 1979, just three years before his death.

In 1934, Hodson, Macadam and the other new recruits formed a "junior moot" to suggest ways for the Round Table to "sharpen the edge of its imperial policy". The result was a remarkable re-affirmation of the Round

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<sup>1</sup> Maud's book on *Local Government in Modern England* (London, 1932) was followed by *City Government: the Johannesburg Experiment* (Oxford, 1938) which praised Curtis's foresight.

Table's original aims. Co-operation was described as "a sham". Great Britain was still responsible for the defence of the whole Empire: only the existence of the League had prevented this from being more widely seen. With the re-emergence of "power states", the true situation was becoming clear. "In these circumstances, is the Commonwealth not faced with the same choice as the Round Table pointed out nearly a quarter of a century ago, between the path to separation and the path to organic union?"<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the younger Round Tablers believed that the time was not yet ripe for painting the moral. Co-operation was still "capable of growth", and "probably the path to organic union no longer starts in quite the same direction". The Round Table would have to work with the grain of opinion. To press too far ahead would be to forego the possibility of influence.<sup>2</sup>

Some thought was given to reviving the "study group" aspect of the Dominion Round Tablers' work. In Australia the idea was welcomed: the secretary of the Melbourne group thought that the Empire was fast returning "to conditions similar to those which existed when the Round Table groups were founded".<sup>3</sup> In Canada, on the other hand, there was "no possibility" of such moves: opinion in the Toronto group, like public opinion generally, was by no means convinced of the need.<sup>4</sup>

The proposal was, therefore, again put to one side. The Round Table reverted to its policy of "marking time". Nevertheless, it is clear that

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<sup>1</sup> Macadam to Curtis, 17 April 1934, and Hodson, "Prolegomena on Round Table Policy", [April 1934,] RT Papers c 860, fols 43 and 45-49.

<sup>2</sup> Hodson, *op cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Laby to Dove, 27 Sept 1933, (Melbourne file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> G P de T Glazebrook to Curtis, 15 Aug 1934, Lothian Papers 285, fol 598.

even among the younger members the original aims of the movement still held good: "organic union", although as yet impracticable (and, of course, undefined) was still the long-term goal.

Two more members were added to the Moot later in the 1930s: Lord Hailey in 1936 and Vincent Harlow in 1938. Hailey was an eminent Indian Civil Servant, and in Curtis's view "the reverse of a reactionary".<sup>1</sup> He returned to England in 1933 (although he was retained by the India Office to help push through the 1935 Act). Curtis then persuaded him to direct the *African Survey*, which was published in 1938. Hailey's attendance at Round Table meetings was therefore irregular before the war, but he was an active and respected figure in the Moot thereafter.<sup>2</sup>

Harlow was an historian in the mould of Coupland, although "much less the public man and much more the devoted scholar": his historical writings presented a far more sophisticated version of Coupland's Anglican and anglocentric thesis.<sup>3</sup> He joined the Moot at the time of his appointment as Rhodes Professor in London; he left after succeeding Coupland as Beit Professor in 1950.

The recruitment of Hailey and the younger Round Tablers failed to galvanise the Round Table in the way that had originally been intended. Nevertheless, they clearly widened the range of opinion and expertise to be found within the Moot. The *Round Table* certainly benefited.

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to J H Oldham, 29 May 1933, Curtis Papers 91, fols 42-43.

<sup>2</sup> Curiously, John Cell's biography of Hailey (Cambridge, 1992) makes no mention of his membership of the Moot. The lack of Round Table items amongst Hailey's Rhodes House papers may be the reason.

<sup>3</sup> F Madden, "The Commonwealth, Commonwealth History and Oxford", in Madden and Fieldhouse (eds), *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth* (London, 1982), p 10; cf Ronald Robinson's contribution to the same volume.

Finance and the Round Table Magazine

The scale of contributions which the Round Table enjoyed between 1909 and 1914 was not to be repeated. A reduced level of operations was therefore maintained, with only one full-time secretary between the wars, Miss Handley, and with Curtis paying his own secretarial expenses. Despite its inevitable impact on sales, the price of the *Round Table* was doubled to 5/- per copy in March 1920.

The Rhodes Trust "£ for £" arrangement was never revived, although Milner was able to secure a one-off donation of £2500 in 1921. Abe Bailey was by far the most generous and dependable contributor, giving £1000 in 1923, £500 pa from 1924 to 1929, and leaving the Moot £1000 pa after his death in 1940. Sir Joseph Flavelle, the Canadian Round Tabler, gave £300 pa for most of the interwar period. Other substantial contributors included Lords Iveagh, Cowdray and Hambledon, the Macmillan family and Col R V Leonard. In addition, Brand, Hichens, Malcolm, Dawson and (after 1930) Lothian all gave regular amounts of between £50 and £200 pa.<sup>1</sup> Contributions nevertheless dwindled steadily throughout the interwar period. In 1925, for instance, they still amounted to £2028, in 1930 to £820, and in 1935 only to £170.<sup>2</sup>

The magazine just about broke even, if the editors' salaries are excluded. Dove drew the remarkably modest salary of £225 pa until 1930, and £300 pa thereafter. Nevertheless, the Round Table also had to pay Curtis's salary of £1500 pa after 1924, and Hodson's (initially £600 pa,

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<sup>1</sup> "Contributors", Feb 1923, Brand Papers, box 70; "Note on contributors to Round Table", [1929,] Lothian Papers 22, fol 536; "Contributors", [1931,] Lothian Papers 267, fol 705; Lothian to Dove, 14 Dec 1933, Lothian Papers 277, fol 621.

<sup>2</sup> [Round Table accounts,] Lothian Papers 267, fols 698-709; Annual Reports, RT (O) Papers.



rising to £1000 pa) after 1930. It was therefore fortuitous, first, that Curtis was enabled by an inheritance to stop drawing a salary after 1930 and, secondly, that the Round Table was able to enter the 1930s with a "considerable nest egg" of at least £13000 in investments.<sup>1</sup> Income from the latter, which was probably in the region of £500 pa at contemporary interest rates, was helpful in making up the shortfall. Even so, the Round Table was making a regular loss of between £600 and £1400 pa throughout the 1930s, which had to be found from selling off investments. By the outbreak of war, the latter stood at just over £6500.<sup>2</sup>

The income from sales of the *Round Table* magazine dropped steadily through the 1920s, from £5400 in 1920 to £3483 in 1930. Taking into account Macmillan's commission, this would suggest sales of approximately 6000 copies in 1920 falling to 4000 in 1930. By 1939, sales had fallen further to 3700. In the latter year, some 750 copies were still given out free. After Britain itself, New Zealand remained by far the best national customer.<sup>3</sup>

The Moot's aim of taking "a distinctive line of its own"<sup>4</sup> was not always easy. The Round Table contained many individuals with strong views and sometimes differing interpretations of the Imperial mission. Some of the problems which confronted the Empire between the wars brought out these differences to a peculiar degree. In a few cases, the clash of opinions

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Sir A Salter, 17 April 1930, Lothian Papers 231, fols 596-99.

<sup>2</sup> Annual Reports, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> [Magazine accounts, 1920,] Brand Papers, box 42; [magazine sales, 1925-31,] Lothian Papers 267, fols 698-701; Minutes of RT meeting, 14 June 1945, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Dawson to Brand, 31 May 1923, Brand Papers, box 70.



within the Moot resulted merely in acrimony. On the whole, however, such cases were rare. The group loyalty engendered by familiarity and shared ideals usually ensured that group discussions were genuinely productive, and resulted in the emergence of some form of consensus.

The Moot's practice of giving instructions to writers extended even to areas where members of the Moot themselves had little or no special competence.<sup>1</sup> Frequently, drastic revisions were demanded once an article had been written, even when the article in question was written by a member of the Moot. Authors were not always happy with this arrangement:

H V Massingham, who was commissioned to write an article on the British "yellow" press in 1924, suggested "that the reforms which the *Round Table* will eventually put forward for the future conduct of the Press should not include that of editorship by a Committee".<sup>2</sup>

Members of the Moot wrote some 58% of identified "policy" articles between the wars.<sup>3</sup> Dove wrote few articles and, as he admitted, when he did he tended "to make bricks without straw or rather you may say to steal some of other peoples' straw".<sup>4</sup> By far the most prolific writer from amongst the "aboriginal" members continued to be Kerr. Almost invariably his articles appeared as the first in each issue; Dove described them as the "voice" of the *Round Table*.<sup>5</sup> Brand, Curtis, Grigg and Malcolm also provided a substantial number of articles; Coupland, Dawson and Hichens

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<sup>1</sup> See, eg, Kerr to A W A Leeper, 19 Jan 1920, Lothian Papers 214, fol 144, for an article on the internal politics of Russia.

<sup>2</sup> H V Massingham to Dove, 13 Feb 1924, Brand Papers, box 70.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix D, "Round Table Articles, by Author".

<sup>4</sup> Dove to Brand, 29 Oct 1923, Brand Papers, box 70.

<sup>5</sup> Dove to Brand, 23 June 1933, Lothian Papers 276, fols 608-11.

rather less. Horsfall wrote at least 39 articles between 1919 and 1939, and Hodson at least 29 between 1930 and 1939.

In Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, the Dominion Round table groups continued to be responsible for the production of local "chronicles" throughout the interwar period. A short-lived Indian "group" was instituted at the end of 1920 by L F Rushbrook Williams, director of the Government of India's publicity department producing the annual "Blue Book".<sup>1</sup> He continued to provide *Round Table* articles until 1925; thereafter articles were provided by John Coatman (1926-32), Ian Stephens (1931-34), Maurice Yeatts (1934-37) and A Inglis (1937-42). Whitney Shepardson contributed articles from America from 1920 to 1934; he rejected the idea of a committee, on the grounds that agreement would be difficult, and that any good writer sought advice anyway.<sup>2</sup> Shepardson was succeeded as US correspondent by Erwin Canham (of the *Christian Science Monitor*), who continued to provide articles until 1955. John Horgan provided the bulk of Irish articles between 1923 and 1967. A short-lived Shanghai group to produce Far East articles was set up by Curtis in 1930, but was disbanded after the Moot decided against giving regular coverage to what they regarded as Curtis's latest obsession.<sup>3</sup>

The remainder of the *Round Table* consisted of articles individually commissioned, often, of course, following guidelines laid down by the Moot. Dawson's membership was here of considerable use. R M Barrington-Ward and Capt Colin Coote provided a number of articles on British politics, and The

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<sup>1</sup> E ff Lascelles to Kerr, 30 Dec 1920, Lothian Papers 214, fols 126-29.

<sup>2</sup> Lothian to Shepardson, 16 Jan 1935, Lothian Papers 295, fol 660; Shepardson to Lothian, 4 April 1935, Lothian Papers 296, fol 708.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to the Moot, 24 Jan 1930, Lothian Papers 23, fol 636; Dove to Brand, 28 July 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fol 623.

*Times'* foreign correspondents (including Norman Ebbutt, Ernest de Caux and the Comte d'Ormesson) contributed several articles on their respective countries. The Moot sometimes obtained articles from local journalists (such as A Stanley Parker of the *Egyptian Gazette* or Herr Kirchen of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*) or from freelance writers (such as Maurice Hindus, who wrote on Russia). On the whole, however, the Moot preferred not to employ "the hack writer type".<sup>1</sup>

Academics provided a number of articles: Sir Arthur Bowley wrote on the birth-rate, Prof H A Smith on the Imperial Conference, and Dr David Mitranj on the Balkans. All Souls was a particularly important source of authors (such as G C Faber, G F Hudson and Reginald Harris). Probably the largest group of outside writers, however, consisted of government officials, either serving or retired. Sir William Peters wrote on Russia from the British Embassy at Moscow, Sir William McClure on Italy from the Embassy at Rome. Sir Frederick Whyte provided a number of articles on India and the far east. Sir Arthur Willert wrote on Europe, Sir Reginald Paterson on Egypt and Sir Selwyn Grier on West Africa. Not all such writers merely reiterated government policy; indeed, many used the freedom which anonymity provided to venture expert and authoritative criticism.

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<sup>1</sup> Brand to Dove, 19 Dec 1922, Brand Papers, box 70.

## 7. PROBLEMS OF EMPIRE AND COMMONWEALTH, 1919-39

Eggleston's complaint of 1932, that the *Round Table* had become a "British Review with appendices", was to a large extent justified. Only some 6% of identified "policy" articles published between the wars were by Dominion Round Tablers, compared to 20% before 1914.<sup>1</sup> It was true, also, that international affairs accounted for a greatly increased proportion of the *Round Table's* coverage. Nevertheless, Imperial and Commonwealth affairs, and especially the politics and relations of Britain and the self-governing Dominions, still provided the *Round Table's* primary focus. India now received roughly the same attention as each of the Dominions, but the other dependencies continued to be poorly represented.<sup>2</sup>

### Empire and Commonwealth

Ironically, Curtis's favoured term "Commonwealth" came increasingly to rival "Empire" as the accepted description of the territories united under the British crown.<sup>3</sup> Equally ironically, Curtis's "principle of the Commonwealth", which had caused such misgivings when first it made its appearance, now came to be "generally accepted" within the Moot, as he could claim in 1930.<sup>4</sup> Curtis attributed the delay in accepting his thesis

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D, "Round Table Articles, by Author".

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C, "Round Table Coverage, by Subject".

<sup>3</sup> S R Mehrotra, "On the Use of the Term 'Commonwealth'", *JCPS*, vol II, no 1 (Nov 1963), pp 10 ff; cf Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, Vol 1 (London, 1937), pp 32, 54 and 58.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Hichens, Dawson, Brand and Lothian, 6 Aug 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fol 627.

to the process of "mental digestion".<sup>1</sup> Scarcely less important were the resignations or departures of some of Curtis's fiercest critics within the group, and the wartime and postwar disrepute into which the idea of "empire" fell.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it would not seem unreasonable to speculate that Curtis's colleagues discovered what might be described as the propaganda value of his doctrine.

The Round Table's characteristic philosophy was elaborated not for merely academic purposes, but in the heat of controversy and with specific intentions. In the 1920s and 30s, Round Tablers were concerned to contrast their own progressive vision of Empire with the "old" imperialism of "diehards" such as Lady Milner, Winston Churchill and Lord Lloyd - whose insistence on outdated and unnecessary forms of control they believed would lead to a colossal increment in the forces of indigenous nationalism and anti-imperialism.<sup>3</sup>

Primarily, however, the Round Tablers were concerned to disarm the enemies of Empire, amongst whom they numbered Dominion, Irish, Egyptian and Indian nationalists; American anti-imperialists; internationalists of the League of Nations Union type; and assorted radicals such as Norman Leys (whom Round Tablers regarded as "a fanatic", and who in turn described Curtis as "one of the three wholly evil people I have ever met"<sup>4</sup>). To

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1 Ibid.

2 Milner recognised that the word "empire" conjured up a vista of "conquest, of domination, of the oppression of the weak by the strong": *Questions of the Hour* (London, 1923), p 112.

3 See, eg, Grigg to Lady Milner, 30 May 1933, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1005, accusing her and Churchill of "short-sightedness".

4 Grigg to Lovat Fraser, 7 Aug 1925, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002; Paul B Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge, 1986), p 83, quoting Leonard Barnes' unpublished autobiography.



this list the interwar years added another, perhaps more dangerous, threat: Bolshevism. As early as July 1917, Kerr saw this creed as the main enemy of "the people of the British Isles, who almost alone clearly comprehend . . . the dominant idea of the Commonwealth - loyalty to principle and loyalty to the whole".<sup>1</sup> Likewise, Curtis described the "principles" for which the British Commonwealth stood as being locked in mortal combat "with those of Marx, which are their negation".<sup>2</sup>

Two aspects of the Commonwealth "principle" might be distinguished, although it was their combination in the historical and contemporary Empire by which Round Tablers set most store: "unity" and "freedom". Frank Pakenham was right in describing Curtis as being "on the side of the big significant forces".<sup>3</sup> The essence of the Round Table argument was that, as law was the only substitute for war, it was the citizen's duty to recognise the overriding claim of the highest authority to which he was subject, which in the British case was the "embryo" and "model" of the future world-state.<sup>4</sup> Internationalism was harnessed to the cause of Empire, which was projected as a brave experiment in "fusing nationalism and racialism . . . into a higher unity".<sup>5</sup>

The second component of the "Commonwealth" argument was that the

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- 1 Kerr to Curtis, 21 July 1917, Lothian Papers 33, fols 19-21.
  - 2 Curtis to Hitchens, Dawson, Brand and Lothian, 6 Aug 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fol 629; cf "Memorandum for discussion at Blickling", 19 Sept 1932, Lothian Papers 268, fols 742-51.
  - 3 Frank Pakenham (Lord Longford), *Peace by Ordeal* (London, 1935), p 141.
  - 4 See, eg, Kerr's Williamstown Lectures of 1923, in Kerr and Curtis, *The Prevention of War* (New Haven, 1923).
  - 5 Grigg to Jeffrey Williams, 9 May 1933, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1004.

British Empire existed in order to assist its peoples towards freedom - that it was, indeed, the world's "great nursery of national states, coloured as well as white".<sup>1</sup> In Curtis's hands, the argument was often pursued ad absurdum, as when he claimed that the first British invaders of India were "all unconsciously laying [the] foundations" for "a structure of government based on the principle of the commonwealth".<sup>2</sup> In the writings of other Round Tablers the argument was put forward in a more sophisticated form. Coupland, in particular, deserves recognition as one of the ablest exponents of the "constitutional procession" interpretation of Imperial history, in which Britain's various dependencies were held to be moving at different stages along a well-worn path "of assimilation or equalization", from direct rule through innumerable levels of representation towards full responsible government.<sup>3</sup>

The Round Tablers' conception of the "constitutional procession" left great scope for the continued exercise of Imperial power. In the first place, the "habits of mind upon which self-government is based cannot begin to develop unless they are policed, advised, and to a great extent administered by some stable power from without".<sup>4</sup> Imperial supervision was necessary right up to the point of full internal self-government. Gandhi was wrong in thinking that suffering was itself an education in self-government: "the breakdown of government . . . precludes any training

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, *Civitas Dei*, Volume Two (London, 1937), p 336.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p 119.

<sup>3</sup> See Coupland, *The Empire in These Days* (London, 1935), p 179 and *passim*. The term "constitutional procession" was coined by Zimmern: *The Third British Empire* (London, 1926), p 8.

<sup>4</sup> [Kerr,] "The Price of Liberty", *RT*, Dec 1919, p 18.

in self-government".<sup>1</sup> Setbacks were indeed inevitable. The *Round Table* pointed to the interwar experience in Cyprus and Ceylon as evidence of "the kind of difficulties that are likely to arise when representative institutions are granted to a people whose capacity to govern is still open to question".<sup>2</sup>

The Round Table's attachment to the principle of self-government was further constrained by the belief, held by most Round Tablers throughout the period 1919-1939, that the dependencies could never be given independence outside the Commonwealth. Internal self-government was one thing; control of defence and foreign policy quite another. The point was emphasised whenever the question of Indian constitutional advance was addressed.<sup>3</sup> Hodson argued in 1931 and again in 1939 that Indian self-government would have to include control of external affairs.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, as late as 1943, Coupland found it impossible to conceive of an "independent Indian foreign policy and defence".<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted, finally, that it was by no means clear to all Round Tablers that the Westminster model was always an appropriate one. Coupland emphasised that "Dominion self-government" did not necessarily

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1 Curtis, "Memorandum for Discussion at Blickling", 19 Sept 1932, Lothian Papers 268, fol 744.

2 [Isaac Foot,] "A Legislature for Palestine?" *RT*, June 1936, pp 513-15.

3 See, eg, Curtis, *Letters to the People of India on Responsible Government* (London edn, 1918), p 61; [Lothian,] "India: Constitution or Chaos", *RT*, March 1931, pp 269 ff.

4 Hodson to Dove, 27 Feb 1931, Lothian Papers 253, fols 718-25; Hodson, "The Round Table" [circulated 6 Jan 1939], Brand Papers, box 153.

5 Coupland, *The Future of India* (Oxford, 1943), p 174.

entail adoption of a parliamentary model.<sup>1</sup> More emphatically, Grigg asserted that the latter was "entirely devoid of flexibility and quite incapable of engendering the essential spirit of compromise in countries where racial and communal divisions present the principal political difficulty".<sup>2</sup> Grigg himself outlined an alternative, corporatist model for East Africa in 1934, and although he achieved no success in "trying . . . to make Lionel [Curtis] take on something of this kind", he received warm support from Duncan, Malcolm and Richard Jebb. (Malcolm and Jebb both suggested that corporatism should also be applied to Britain.)<sup>3</sup>

It is clear, then, that the Round Table's commitment to self-government in the dependencies was by no means straightforward. Their development of the language of "Commonwealth" was undoubtedly important, but it was affirmative rather than critical. The reasons why the group was sometimes prominent amongst those who urged an accelerated advance towards self-government are to be found less in any a priori attachment to the democratic principle than in a pragmatic response to the fragility of British power.

### Trusteeship and Development

The "principle of the Commonwealth" was in many ways simply an application of "trusteeship" to the constitutional sphere. Although the former principle was the Round Table's characteristic contribution to the

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<sup>1</sup> Coupland, *The Empire in These Days* (London, 1935), p 115; cf his letter to *The Times*, 20 Feb 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg, *The British Commonwealth* (London, 1943), p 62.

<sup>3</sup> Grigg, *The Constitutional Problem in Kenya* (Nottingham, 1934); Grigg to Duncan, 21 March 1934, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1004; Duncan to Grigg, 25 Feb 1934, Malcolm to Grigg, 21 April 1934, Jebb to Grigg, 4 Feb 1934, *ibid*.



debate on Empire, the latter continued to inform much Round Table writing on the dependencies. Coupland in particular preferred "trusteeship" to "Commonwealth", but other Round Tablers (including Curtis) also tended to use the terms interchangeably.<sup>1</sup> In his wartime *Round Table* articles, Kerr anticipated Lugard's more famous statement of the case by a number of years when he asserted that dependencies were held in trust not only on behalf of their inhabitants, but also "on behalf of civilization".<sup>2</sup>

The Round Table was, of course, not unusual in suggesting that British rule either was or should be characterised by "trusteeship". The principle was common currency amongst all shades of opinion on the Empire. Nevertheless, different shades clearly attached different weight to the idea, and injected into it different contents. Here, again, the Round Table was to be found playing a mediating rôle: seeking on the one hand to disarm the critics of Empire, and on the other to limit the influence of less progressive exponents of the Imperial ethic.

Round Tablers were acutely sensitive to the charge that "all the talk about 'trusteeship'" was "merely camouflage or cant", and that British rule had been imposed for no "other purpose than to smooth the profitable path of British trade".<sup>3</sup> The locus classicus of such an interpretation was J A Hobson's *Imperialism* of 1902. After one bruising encounter with its author, Curtis was driven to exclaim: "One's heart bleeds for Hobson! It

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<sup>1</sup> See, eg, [Curtis,] *Material for Indian Chapter* [1916], RT Papers c 828, fols 338 and passim.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The Harvest of War", *RT*, Dec 1915, p 13. For Lugard, see *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London, 1922), p 18 and passim.

<sup>3</sup> Coupland, *The Empire in These Days* (London, 1935), pp 163-64.



must hurt I should imagine to think so ill of men in general!"<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Hobson's critique found increasing favour. It was clearly insufficient simply to impute a malignant intention to those who adopted such a critique. Indeed, it was "imperative . . . to counteract the increasing vogue" of their "dangerous half-truths".<sup>2</sup> This the Round Tableists sought to do partly by emphasising that Britain derived no particular economic advantage from the control of her colonies, nor should seek to do so.

With the exception of Grigg, the Moot was firmly opposed to the Chamberlainite tradition of imperialism, still upheld by the likes of Amery, which regarded the colonies as "undeveloped estates" to be exploited for the sole benefit of the metropolitan economy.<sup>3</sup> The majority of Round Tableists remained firmly committed both to free trade orthodoxy and to an interpretation of "trusteeship" in which the maintenance of an "open door" made moral and political, as well as economic, sense. In 1926 the *Round Table* argued that the abandonment of Britain's "open door" policy would excite the hostility of other powers, especially the United States; in 1930 Harold Butler invoked the example of the Thirteen Colonies to warn against arousing the resentment of the inhabitants of the dependencies themselves.<sup>4</sup> Both arguments were deployed in 1932, in anticipation of the Ottawa

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Coupland, 29 Nov 1916, RT Papers c 817, fols 169-70.

<sup>2</sup> Coupland, "The Study of the British Commonwealth" (inaugural lecture as Beit Professor, Oxford, 19 Nov 1921), reprinted in *The Empire in These Days* (London, 1935), p 22.

<sup>3</sup> For Grigg, see "The British Empire, the League of Nations and the Rhodes Ideal", [circulated 28 Sept 1932,] Lothian Papers 268, fols 753-89.

<sup>4</sup> "Post-War Tendencies in Empire Trade", RT, Sept 1926, pp 690-703; [H Butler,] "Imperial Economic Unity", RT, Sept 1930, pp 745-65.

Conference.<sup>1</sup>

When the British Government did impose tariff preferences in the non-mandated colonies, followed by anti-Japanese quotas and duties, Coupland replied with a forceful denunciation of a policy which "goes far to justify what is said abroad of our national hypocrisy".<sup>2</sup> Hodson again pressed in 1937 for an urgent reconsideration of a policy which threw into question the whole moral basis of British rule. "Is a trustee . . . entitled to make a commercial arrangement with himself on behalf of his ward which is to his own profit, even though it also be to his ward's?" The *Round Table's* answer was a clear and unequivocal "no".<sup>3</sup>

While the Moot was thus fervently opposed to an economic policy in the dependencies which favoured Britain at the expense of other developed countries, there was no hostility to the idea of Western economic penetration as such. Indeed, the argument that "the white man who seeks to develop the resources" of a colony was "a natural enemy of the native" was thought to be the reverse of the truth.<sup>4</sup> As Coupland argued,

"Livingstone linked commerce with Christianity as a means of fulfilling our duty to 'civilise' Africa. And it is becoming more and more obvious in these days that the execution of a 'trust' for the welfare of the natives . . . depends for its efficiency on an adequate local revenue, which in turn depends on economic development".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Hodson,] "Imperial Preference", *RT*, March 1932, pp 246-65.

<sup>2</sup> [Coupland,] "The Future of Colonial Trusteeship", *RT*, Sept 1934, pp 732-45.

<sup>3</sup> [Hodson,] "Colonial Tariffs and Quotas", *RT*, Dec 1937, pp 92-109.

<sup>4</sup> [Kerr,] "The Next Imperial Conference", *RT*, March 1926, pp 227-55.

<sup>5</sup> [Coupland,] "The Future of Colonial Trusteeship", *RT*, Sept 1934, p 734.

'Philanthropy and five per cent' were, thus, far from incompatible.

Moreover, it was part of the Empire's "trusteeship" to ensure that the natural resources of the colonies were made available to the developed economies of the West.<sup>1</sup>

Only slowly did it dawn on the Round Tablers that relatively few of the benefits of economic development reached the inhabitants of the colonies themselves. At the time of Labour's 1929 Colonial Development Act, Kerr wrote to Garvin that Britain's record in her dependent Empire - compared to France's or America's - had been an "economic failure", and that "we never really tackled the problem of raising the standard of living of the people".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it was only after the outbreak of riots in the West Indies that the *Round Table* began to tackle the problem. Even then, the solution proffered was not an adjustment of the economic advantages within the colonies or between the colonies and metropolis, but 'the provision of some outlet . . . for the surplus population'.<sup>3</sup> The principle of financial self-sufficiency was still being upheld by Sir Selwyn Grier in March 1939, although he broke new ground by championing the interests of the producer against those of the monopolistic trading companies.<sup>4</sup>

Lord Hailey's *African Survey* has often been credited with leading the shift towards state-assisted colonial development which took place at the beginning of the Second World War. J W Cell has shown that Hailey himself

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<sup>1</sup> [Hodson,] "Colonial Raw Materials", *RT*, March 1936, pp 306-14.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Garvin, 23 Sept 1929, Lothian Papers 236, fols 244-46.

<sup>3</sup> "Imperial Responsibilities in the West Indies", *RT*, Sept 1938, pp 692-707.

<sup>4</sup> [Grier,] "Problems of British West Africa", *RT*, March 1939, pp 291-308.

was in fact "just in time to catch the tide" initiated primarily by Malcolm MacDonald and the Fabians.<sup>1</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that other members of the Round Table were of importance in this shift. On the other hand they rapidly adjusted themselves to the new way of thinking. By 1942, Hailey was calling in the *Round Table* for "a new conception" of metropolitan-colonial relations which would include a "far more effective intervention on our part to promote their development than the traditions of a previous generation had contemplated".<sup>2</sup>

#### India: "Constitution or Chaos"

The Round Table's dealings with India between 1910 and 1919 illustrated the importance of personal contacts and individual interest in the evolution of Moot policy. Both were more limited in scope for the first decade after 1919. Curtis appears to have lost interest in India, and Dove was the only member of the Moot to visit the country in the early 1920s. Meston left India early in 1920. Marris remained until 1928, but he was by no means willing to initiate any new directions in Round Table policy. The Round Tablers' main contacts in India were their regular correspondents. Rushbrook Williams and Coatman were successive directors of Public Information, and Stephens worked for the same department; Yeatts was an official in the Home Department. Curtis and Kerr both attempted to enliven the magazine with contributions from native Indians, but the majority of the Moot was unwilling to undertake any such "experiment".<sup>3</sup>

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1 J W Cell, *Hailey* (Cambridge, 1992), p 240.

2 [Hailey,] "The Future of the Colonies", *RT*, Dec 1942, pp 8-16.

3 Minutes of RT meeting, 31 July 1929, RT (O) Papers; Miss Handley to Kerr, 11 Feb 1930, Lothian Papers 244, fol 613.



Grigg complained in 1931 that the *Round Table's* Indian chronicles consisted largely of "wandering comments on the fluctuations of Indian opinion".<sup>1</sup> There was much truth in his criticism. Coatman admitted that Indian politics left him "puzzled and irritated".<sup>2</sup> It was generally believed that the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms went far towards meeting the demands of the nationalist movement. (Similarly, the missionary official J J Oldham thought that the reforms gave Indians "the power . . . of wresting, within a measurable period of time, complete swaraj".<sup>3</sup>) The nationalist attitude was therefore proof that Indians were not yet "fit for self-government".<sup>4</sup>

The question of some further constitutional advance was raised as early as November 1920 by E ff Lascelles, a former New Zealand Round Tabler now employed as a lecturer by the Indian Army. Lascelles was highly critical of the ICS's lack of "political sense", and suggested various measures to accustom the Service to working under responsible government.<sup>5</sup> (None, incidentally, was advocated by the *Round Table*.) Turning to the constitutional sphere,

"There is one thing of which I feel certain: it is that it will not be possible to wait for the statutory period of ten years before the next advance is made. I think that it is essential that forward thinking should be done from the outset and that we should make concessions before they are demanded . . . . Round

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- <sup>1</sup> Grigg to Hichens, 15 Dec 1931, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.
  - <sup>2</sup> [Coatman,] "The Inwardness of the Indian Problem", *RT*, June 1926, p 302.
  - <sup>3</sup> Oldham [to Dove?], 31 Dec 1921, Lothian Papers 19, fols 232-39.
  - <sup>4</sup> [R Williams,] "India: A Survey of the Situation", *RT*, Dec 1924, p 149.
  - <sup>5</sup> Lascelles to Kerr, 18 Dec 1919, Lothian Papers 213, fols 77-81.



Table thinking is very necessary just now. My impression is that India wants Curtis again".<sup>1</sup>

Little came of this letter. Kerr wrote back that, in the opinion of the Moot, Her Majesty's Government had, if anything, been over-generous with its reforms. It was now up to Indians to work them.<sup>2</sup>

By 1923, there was considerable discussion within Government of India circles of the causes of the political impasse. (This led to the appointment of the Muddiman Committee in 1924, whose majority reported the following year that the main cause of deadlock was the irresponsible attitude of Indian politicians.<sup>3</sup>) In April 1923 a memorandum, apparently by Curtis, discussed the desirability or otherwise of some further British declaration of aims. The memorandum failed to come to a decision one way or the other, but posited something short of Dominion self-government, with no responsibility for defence or foreign policy, as the "ultimate limit" which India would reach in "three or four generations, perhaps longer".<sup>4</sup>

The extent of Indian unrest could not forever be obscured by a cloud of condemnation and wishful thinking. The early appointment of the Simon Commission in 1927 acknowledged this fact; its reception in India confirmed it. Once again, the question of Indian constitutional reform forced itself onto the British agenda.

In June 1928 the Round Table re-instituted its "Indian Moot", now consisting of Curtis, Dove, Feetham, Kerr and Marris. Curtis was deputed

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<sup>1</sup> Lascelles to Kerr, 24 Nov 1920, Lothian Papers 214, fols 113-5.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Lascelles, 24 Dec 1920, Lothian Papers 214, fols 121-23.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee . . . appointed by the Government of India* (Cmd 2360), 1925.

<sup>4</sup> [Curtis?], "India" [circulated to Moot 6 April 1923], Brand Papers, box 70.

to write for the *Round Table* on the "broad questions of principle".<sup>1</sup> Probably because of a divergence of views within the "Indian Moot", Curtis's article was somewhat anodyne: welcoming the opportunity for review, but impressing a good deal of caution.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, Dawson was striking out somewhat further than his colleagues. Between December 1928 and March 1929 he visited India, and on his return he wrote a large number of leaders and articles on India "with the idea of educating the public at home" on the necessity of some forward move. (*The Times'* Indian coverage was subsequently printed as a pamphlet to show that the English press was "not unconstructive".)<sup>3</sup>

The divergence of views within the "Indian Moot" finally came to a head towards the end of 1929. The occasion was provided by Marris's article commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Reforms. Marris came close to acknowledging the failure of the 1919 Act, which "nobody for choice would wish to see . . . indefinitely prolonged". Nevertheless, he saw a "difficulty . . . in extracting from its record any sure guidance for the future", and offered a gloomy prognosis for the forthcoming Simon Report, as bound to run into the same problems of Indian "irresponsibility" and unrealistic expectations.<sup>4</sup>

Kerr wrote to Marris, trying to persuade him to change the tone of his article. Britain was in India as an "indispensable adviser" not as of

1 Minutes of RT meeting, 12 June 1928, RT (O) Papers.

2 [Curtis,] "The Task of the Simon Commission", *RT*, Sept 1928, pp 685-713.

3 Dawson, Notes on Indian Tour and subsequent articles, Dawson Papers 83, fols 141-45; cf R J Moore, *The Crisis of Indian Unity, 1917-40* (Oxford, 1974), pp 47-48.

4 [Marris,] "India and 1930", *RT*, Dec 1929, pp 50-78.

"divine right". He identified a fundamental "defect" in Marris's article,

"that it assumes that Great Britain alone, with the advice of the Simon Commission, has got to decide about the future of the Indian Constitution. In the strictly constitutional sense this is true. In the political sense I believe it is quite untrue".<sup>1</sup>

Marris refused to make the changes Kerr requested: the idea "that Indian sentiment must not merely be consulted, but appeased", might be "the Round Table's view but it is not my view and so I cannot write it".<sup>2</sup>

Kerr's controversy with Marris was really over a question of degree: Marris did not deny that Indians should be consulted and, where possible, won over, while Kerr still saw a large rôle for the British in assessing Indian claims. Nevertheless, Kerr and the Round Table were now more inclined to place more responsibility for finding a solution in Indian hands. The substantive reason for this was a realisation that otherwise British rule would lead "through Black and Tannery to inevitable defeat".<sup>3</sup>

The "Irwin Declaration" of 31 October 1929 committed the Government to the policy which Kerr had urged on Marris.<sup>4</sup> The concomitant pledge that Dominion status was "the natural issue of India's constitutional progress" subsequently aroused much opposition. Marris thought that it would merely encourage Indians to press for a complete British withdrawal.<sup>5</sup> From South

<sup>1</sup> Kerr to Marris, 23 Oct 1929, Lothian Papers 237, fols 327-32.

<sup>2</sup> Marris to Kerr, 25 Oct 1929, Lothian Papers 237, fols 333-4. Marris's emphasis. Marris's article was printed as it stood, owing to the lack of time for finding a new writer: Miss Handley to Marris, 28 Oct 1929, Lothian Papers 237, fol 338.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Marris, 23 Oct 1929, Lothian Papers 237, fols 327-32.

<sup>4</sup> The Declaration was issued despite considerable opposition from within the Cabinet and elsewhere: see R J Moore, *The Crisis of Indian Unity, 1917-40* (Oxford, 1974) pp 41-94, and J Brown, *Gandhi and Civil Disobedience* (Cambridge, 1977), pp 42 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Marris to Lothian, 24 July 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fols 612-18.

Africa, Duncan opposed the idea on different grounds:

"India will never fit in as a Dominion in the existing scheme of the British Commonwealth. Her coming in will help to break such bonds as still are left of unity. The alternatives are to hold her by force or let her go and of these two I prefer the latter . . . . We can't afford it and she isn't worth it".<sup>1</sup>

Neither Marris's nor Duncan's views found favour with the Moot. Dawson gave Irwin's declaration a hearty endorsement in *The Times*,<sup>2</sup> while in the *Round Table* Kerr welcomed it as "statesmanlike". Britain had now accepted the case for self-government; "the question to be decided is the practical one, as to how far and at what pace responsibility can be safely transferred".<sup>3</sup>

Given Kerr's acknowledgement of the need to conciliate, if not appease, Indian opinion, what is surprising is how limited were the steps he favoured. After seeing the Simon Commission's provisional scheme, he suggested further reservations: that the Governors should possess more powers than a "constitutional monarch"; and that the executives be opened to non-elected individuals nominated by the Chief Minister or Governor.<sup>4</sup> At the level of central government, Kerr saw "democracy" as "entirely out of the question". He suggested a consultative Assembly consisting of delegations from provincial legislatures, and a Council - with undefined powers - entirely selected by the Viceroy.<sup>5</sup> Kerr's suggestions represented a considerable advance on the 1919 Reforms, but they fell far short both of

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1 Duncan to Dove, 29 Dec 1931, RT Papers c 813, fols 63-65.

2 *The Times*, 1 Nov 1929.

3 [Kerr,] "Where are We Going?" RT, March 1930, p 231.

4 Kerr to Simon, 3 March 1930, Lothian Papers 253, fols 779-83.

5 Kerr to Simon, 10 March 1930, Lothian Papers 253, fols 784-92.



Dominion status (even as interpreted before the 1926 Conference) and of Indian expectations.

The Simon Commission's proposals had already "been overtaken by British initiatives" by the time they were published.<sup>1</sup> The Moot was still intent on "emphasising the importance of fixing a limit beyond which Great Britain cannot go"<sup>2</sup>, but it soon became clear that a more positive response was needed. At a meeting at the end of July 1930, attended by Coatman but not Harris, the Moot agreed that after the Simon Report had advocated responsible government in the provinces, "it was impossible not to go further" and introduce "a measure of responsibility" at the centre. Control of the ICS, the Army, the frontier province, relations with the princes and the Consolidated Fund would, however, remain under the direct control of the Viceroy.<sup>3</sup>

Kerr/Lothian was deputed to appraise the Report for the *Round Table*. He devoted a large part of his article to a plea for collaboration.

"The real task before India is not to get rid of the British Raj . . . . Indeed, the greatest danger to India today is that Great Britain may become too ready to throw off her responsibility and to leave India to 'stew in her own juice' . . . . Indians should assume the actual responsibility for a large part of Indian government, and demonstrate their capacity to maintain themselves in power and to carry on a just and efficient administration, before the steadying hand of Britain is wholly removed."

Having acknowledged that the Simon Report "has no friends" in India, Lothian proceeded to praise its generosity and even suggested that it went "dangerously far". No mention was made of the further steps agreed by the

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<sup>1</sup> J Brown, *Modern India: the Origins of an Asian Democracy* (Oxford, 1985), p 256.

<sup>2</sup> Dove to Lothian, 8 July 1930, Lothian Papers 251, fols 600-02.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, 31 July 1930, RT (O) Papers.



Moot, only of the idea of "fixing a limit". Criticised by Dove for omitting the Moot's "positive suggestion", Lothian argued that to have included proposals for constitutional moves at the centre would not have helped the Round Table Conference (to which he had been appointed one of the Liberal delegates). Some concession by Britain was inevitable, but it was important for Indians to be seen to share responsibility for whatever scheme might emerge.<sup>2</sup>

The first Round Table Conference was remarkable mainly for the Princes' agreement to the idea of an all-India federation. Lothian, like other British participants, saw this as a godsend. In an article for the *Round Table* - 2000 copies of which were printed as a pamphlet and circulated to every MP as well as in India and the United States<sup>3</sup> - he stated enthusiastically that the Conference "has started India and Great Britain on a new road from which there can be no turning back".<sup>4</sup>

After a discussion of the implications of the Princes' announcement, Amery recorded Lothian's opinion that

"the control at the centre will be in the hands of the Princes who will not only command a third of the members in the Legislature but have no difficulty whatever in buying up the others. His whole picture in fact was one of a thoroughly corrupt but otherwise peaceful and monarchical India".<sup>5</sup>

Lothian put the case more circumspectly in the *Round Table*. There would be

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<sup>1</sup> [Lothian,] "The Crisis in India", *RT*, Sept 1930, pp 679-708.

<sup>2</sup> Lothian to Dove, 27 Aug 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fol 642, replying to Dove to Lothian, 20 Aug 1930, *ibid*, fols 638-41.

<sup>3</sup> Lothian to Dove, 13 March 1931, Lothian Papers 253, fol 713.

<sup>4</sup> [Lothian,] "India: Constitution or Chaos", *RT*, March 1931, p 240.

<sup>5</sup> J Barnes and D Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries, 1929-45* (London, 1988), p 296 (entry of 16 June 1933).

little place for Congress radicalism in an all-India federation. While Britain should retain certain essential powers (such as nomination of the viceroy and, through him, control of the army, of foreign policy, and of currency, debt and financial stability), federation provided the means whereby the remaining functions of central government could pass from British hands without fear of "revolutionary" consequences.<sup>1</sup>

Lothian was closely involved with the formulation of a constitutional scheme for India, as a delegate to the two further Round Table Conferences in 1931-2, as Under-Secretary at the India Office, and as chairman of the Franchise Committee which toured India early in 1932. During his visit to India he was largely but unsuccessfully concerned with holding the Princes to their commitment to federation. Lothian was also a member of the Joint Select Committee which examined the Government of India Bill.<sup>2</sup> Coupland weighed the niceties of the status which the Bill would confer on India, and judged that it would leave her "in the penultimate stage" of her "advance to Dominion Status": a position "similar in principle to that in Canada, say, before 1871 or in South Africa before 1914".<sup>3</sup>

Hodson argued that further concessions might be needed (including control of defence and foreign policy), since Congress was clearly "the only real political force".<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, for the majority of the Moot as for the Government, the position reached by early 1931 - provincial

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1 [Lothian,] "India: Constitution or Chaos", RT. 3.31, pp 268 ff.

2 Lothian's rôle as Under-Secretary and chairman of the Franchise Committee is examined in Gerard Douds, "Lothian and the Indian Federation", pp 62-76 of John Turner, *The Larger Idea* (London, 1988).

3 Coupland, "India and Dominion Status" (dated Oct 1934), in *The Empire in These Days* (London, 1935), pp 157 and 151.

4 Hodson to Dove, 27 Feb 1931, Lothian Papers 253, fols 718-25.

self-government "with safeguards", and all-Indian federation with limitations - represented the ne plus ultra, "the limit to which the scope of Indian self-government can be extended at the present time".<sup>1</sup> The Round Table therefore acted as a pressure group on Government policy only tangentially, helping to keep it on the lines laid down in 1929-31; its main purpose was to defend and win support for that policy against its critics in India and Britain.

Undoubtedly the most dangerous threat to the reforms was the "diehard" opposition emanating from the right of the Tory party.<sup>2</sup> Dawson's *Times* was once again prominent in support of Government policy, and in attacking those who urged "that the ideal of Indian hopes is to be a new and inferior grade of constitutional status".<sup>3</sup> Grigg offered suggestions on how to tackle criticism of the constitutional and financial aspects of the Reforms.<sup>4</sup> (In 1933 he returned to Parliament as MP for Altrincham, after defeating Randolph Churchill.) At one point, Lothian and Curtis were involved with Irwin, Sir Stanley Reed and Patrick Young in planning a "Round Table [Conference] Society" to rally "moderate Conservative" opinion and dispel "doubts" and "suspicions" in India. The society never materialised, however, probably through failure to secure the support of Zetland, whose leadership was thought essential.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Coupland, *loc cit.*, p 150.

2 See Carl Bridge, *Holding India to the Empire* (New York, 1986).

3 *The Times*, 28 Nov 1931; Dawson's policy is well covered by Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (London, 1955), chapters 23-27.

4 See, eg, Grigg to Dove, 7 June 1932, Lothian Papers 267, fols 711-14.

5 See "Note of Conclusions Reached", 5 July 1932, Lothian Papers 263, fols 219-20; also Sir Stanley Reed's draft letter to potential supporters [sent 25 July 1932], Lothian Papers 267, fols 642-44.

Such was the gravity of the issue that it was thought possible that Baldwin might have to split his party to uphold the "national" principle.<sup>1</sup> The Round Table's frustration with the "diehards" was increased by the belief that at most they could delay reform until Labour returned to office; then a more radical scheme would be bound to emerge.<sup>2</sup>

To the Round Table's immense relief, the Government managed to override "diehard" opposition and place the Government of India Act on the statute book. Within months of its passage, the *Round Table* detected an "increasingly realist attitude . . . developing in the political parties in India".<sup>3</sup> Lothian helped pave the way for Congress moderates to participate in provincial government, by assuring them that Governors would be unlikely to use their reserved powers against a ministry enjoying electoral support.<sup>4</sup> The Viceroy, Linlithgow, initially regarded Lothian's interference as unhelpful.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, he soon made similar assurances, and Congress at last decided to enter the electoral fray. The *Round Table* praised this decision as a "triumph for moderate forces". Indeed, it was now thought possible to assert with confidence that "underlying most Indian opinion is a strong faith in the value of the British connection".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Hodson et al,] "Great Britain: the Slippery Slope", *RT*, June 1934, p 609.

<sup>2</sup> [Stephens,] "India: Swaraj the Phoenix", *RT*, June 1934, p 570; cf Grigg to Lady Milner, 30 May 1933, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.

<sup>3</sup> [Yeatts,] "Interregnum in India", *RT*, Dec 1935, p 124.

<sup>4</sup> Letters to *The Times*, 6 and 13 April 1937, 17 and 21 Feb 1938.

<sup>5</sup> Linlithgow to Lothian, 4 April 1938, Lothian Papers 364, fols 513-14.

<sup>6</sup> [Inglis,] "An Indian Milestone", *RT*, Sept 1937, pp 809 and 819.



### The Middle East

Britain's military successes against the Ottoman Empire ironically gave her a much enlarged rôle in the Middle East just at the time when she seemed to be losing her grip on Egypt. Amery saw in this a strategic windfall which would consolidate once and for all the "Southern British World" which stretched in an arc "from Cape Town to Wellington".<sup>1</sup> His former colleagues were far from convinced. "Every competent observer" recognised that "the people of these regions" could not "maintain order for themselves". Nevertheless, it was "not in the world's interest for England to add further to responsibilities already so greatly out of proportion to her relative strength".<sup>2</sup>

One solution to the problem, which Curtis advocated forcefully in December 1918, was for the United States to "make herself answerable to a league of Nations for peace, order, and good government in some or all of the regions of the Middle East".<sup>3</sup> Curtis's suggestion caused some disagreement within the Moot. Coupland reported that it was stirring up considerable animosity from the Foreign Office.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the suggestion was again put forward a year later, with the complaint that while America vacillated things were steadily going "from bad to worse".<sup>5</sup> America's decision not to undertake any such global responsibilities came as a disappointment to the Moot, which spent much of the following two decades trying to reverse the decision.

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<sup>1</sup> See V R Louis, *In the Name of God, Go!* (New York, 1992), pp 68-70.

<sup>2</sup> "The Price of Liberty", *RT*, Dec 1919, pp 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> [Curtis,] "Windows of Freedom", *RT*, Dec 1918, pp 33-34.

<sup>4</sup> Coupland to Kerr, 20 Jan 1919, Lothian Papers 482 (single item).

<sup>5</sup> [Toyabee,] "The Outlook in the Middle East", *RT*, Dec 1919, p 57.



Britain thus entered the 1920s with an extensive new rôle in the region. The *Round Table* was determined that Britain should do so "with open eyes". None of the territories now brought under the aegis of the Empire/Commonwealth was easily defensible by sea. Large sums would have to be found for the defence of frontiers, and if to these was added the burden of maintaining order amongst peoples who were "highly strung" and "prone to sudden spontaneous uprisings", it was "unlikely that the cost can be met". It was essential, therefore, that the cost "be lessened".<sup>1</sup>

With the contemporary situation in Egypt firmly in mind, the solution which the *Round Table* now proffered was to limit Britain's liabilities to the bare essentials, and to seek the collaboration of indigenous groups. T E Lawrence was enlisted to advocate just such a policy in the *Round Table*. The earth, Lawrence contended, "is just a track along which countries and continents race with one another, and for all we know Asia may be gaining on us mentally". Nationalism was "too universal to be extinguished, too widespread to be temporary". The only way to channel it and to limit its "destructive" consequences was by "an active [policy] of imposing responsibility on the local peoples".

"They will not wish to take charge, but we can force their hand by preparing to go. We do not risk losing them to another power . . . . [If] assured of eventual dominion status, and present internal autonomy, [they] would be delighted to affiliate with us . . . . The alternative is to hold on to them with ever-lessening force, till the anarchy is too expensive, and we let go."<sup>2</sup>

The policy thus urged by the *Round Table* was in fact adopted by the British Government, at least in Iraq and Persia. The *Round Table* refrained from

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 55-97.

<sup>2</sup> [T E Lawrence,] "The Changing East", *RT*, Sept 1920, pp 756-72.

comment on the latter country, but Iraq was the subject of two complacent and self-congratulatory articles, in 1923 and 1926.<sup>1</sup>

In Palestine, there was less scope for the kind of solution advocated by the Round Table and subsequently pursued in Egypt and Iraq, because of the British commitment to a Jewish "national home" contained in the Balfour Declaration of November 1917.

On Zionism the Round Table's stance was again much less clear-cut than Amery's. The latter saw the establishment of a Jewish colony in Palestine as an important instrument of British strategic and economic penetration of the region.<sup>2</sup> Of the Round Tablers, only Zimmern consistently held this view. In 1916 his attempts to ventilate the issue through the *Round Table* ran up against the hostility of the rest of the Koot.<sup>3</sup> The editors agreed to print a "contributed" article in 1918 by Leon Simon, who welcomed the Balfour Declaration as the first step to a "self-governing Jewish Commonwealth".<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, other *Round Table* articles took a different view. In 1919 Toynbee asserted that Jewish settlement would only create a new problem by "causing unrest among the local Christians and Moslems".<sup>5</sup> The following year, T E Lawrence was equally

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<sup>1</sup> [Gertrude Bell,] "Great Britain and the 'Iraq", *RT*, Dec 1923, pp 64-83; "The Working of the 'Iraq Parliament", *RT*, Dec 1926, pp 18-36.

<sup>2</sup> Amery, *My Political Life, Vol II* (London, 1953), pp 115-117; cf Louis, *op.cit.* pp 70-74, 89-94.

<sup>3</sup> Zimmern to J A Hobson, 29 Sept 1916, *RT Papers* c 817, fols 152-58; Kerr to Zimmern, 29 Nov 1916, *ibid.* fol 168.

<sup>4</sup> [Leon Simon,] "Palestine and Jewish Nationalism" ("contributed"), *RT*, March 1918, pp 308-36.

<sup>5</sup> [Toynbee,] "The Outlook in the Middle East", *RT*, Dec 1919, pp 82-83.

dismissive of Zionist schemes.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the Round Tablers appear to have been won over by Zionism in the course of the 1920s. Kerr lent his support to schemes to reward Weizmann with a knighthood<sup>2</sup>; in 1928 he joined the Palestine Mandate Society. The Round Table as a whole remained unable to take a clear line on Palestine, convinced that "both Jew and Arab may make a good case in his defence".<sup>3</sup> It was not until 1936 - when the antagonisms seemed intractable - that the *Round Table* resumed its coverage. Still, the Moot attempted to be even-handed, balancing one article which rejected the proposal of a legislative council (on the grounds that it would leave the Jews a permanent minority) with another which called for a limitation of Jewish immigration (and suggested that it be diverted to British Guiana).<sup>4</sup>

The Peel Commission of 1936-37, of which Coupland was a member and whose Report he drafted, saw partition as the only solution to the problem. Toynbee welcomed his Report as a "great state paper", the product of "moral courage" and "extreme intellectual ability". Nevertheless, he recognised that a "surgical operation" would not please the Arabs, and would leave two economically unviable units. He suggested, therefore, that partition should be accompanied by federation of both units with the Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, with a continued Anglo-French presence in the region.<sup>5</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> [T E Lawrence,] "The Changing East", *RT*, Sept 1920, p 769.

<sup>2</sup> See, eg, Kerr to Sir Herbert Samuel, 4 Jan 1921, Lothian Papers 218, fols 668-9.

<sup>3</sup> [Isaac Foot,] "A Legislature for Palestine?", *RT*, June 1936, p 512.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 503-17; [N Barbour,] "Palestine: the Commissioner's Task", *RT*, Dec 1936, pp 79-94. The suggestion concerning British Guiana was repeated by Harlow in June 1939.

<sup>5</sup> [Toynbee,] "The Palestine Report and After", *RT*, Sept 1937, pp 740-54.

Toynbee's view, the whole region constituted "a natural and historic unity, which was artificially partitioned . . . to meet . . . the respective exigencies of British and French imperialism".<sup>1</sup>

### Southern Africa

Lack of criticism of South African policy was considered to be in the natives' best interests, as Curtis explained in *The Times* in 1935: "South Africans must and will find out for themselves what is right or wrong with their own policy. Lectures from us merely delay the process".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's insistence on South African autonomy was no doubt sincere. Nevertheless, it concealed the very real extent of the Moot's sympathy with the trend of "native" policy in the Union. Close study of the problem of "poor whites", as well as a sense of foreboding, had led the "Kindergarten" towards a liberal form of segregationism. Kerr's conviction on this matter was strengthened as a result of his tour of the United States in 1909.<sup>3</sup> On his return to England, Kerr wrote a long article for *The Times* in which he argued that segregation was the only way to enable "the native . . . to rise steadily in the scale of civilization".<sup>4</sup> Similar views were held by other members of the Moot. In 1924 Grigg suggested to Bailey that the only solution to South Africa's Indian "problem" was that "you will have to end

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<sup>1</sup> [Toynbee,] "A Federal Solution" ("Editorial"), pp 268-77 of "Palestine: the Vider Hope", *RT*, March 1939, pp 252-77 (quotation from p 275); cf [Harlow,] "Palestine: A Leaf Turned", *RT*, June 1939, pp 457-75.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, 15 May 1935; cf Curtis, "South Africa Since the Union", *Atlantic Monthly*, vol 140 (Aug 1927), p 263.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr's notes from his American tour are preserved as Lothian Papers 5, fols 105-77.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times*, 5 Nov 1910.



up by making a regular enclave and settlement for them in some special part of the Union".<sup>1</sup>

Smuts's defeat by Hertzog in 1924, and the latter's more overtly racist policies, caused misgivings within the Moot, including fear of "a form of racial strife . . . which will eventually ramify all over Africa, and even Asia".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it was the overtness of Hertzog's policies rather than their content which troubled Kerr:

"People will stand administrative discrimination . . . . But as soon as you make legal discrimination the rule, it stirs a totally different degree of animosity . . . . The negro problem is manageable in America largely because the Constitution makes no discrimination between black and white, though, as everybody knows, there is an immense amount of discrimination in practice".<sup>3</sup>

The advent of the Fusion Government in 1933, in which Duncan and Smuts were again cabinet ministers, was greeted with relief by the Moot. The introduction of new segregation laws and the disfranchisement of educated Africans appear to have caused little concern. The *Round Table's* South African committee quoted with approval Duncan's statement that, if such action were not taken, the African vote "would increase fast as education spread, and in fifty or a hundred years' time might tilt the balance fatally against the white vote".<sup>4</sup>

One aspect of white South African aspirations of which the "Selborne Memorandum" made good use was the possibility of the expansion of South

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1 Grigg to Bailey, 10 April 1924, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1001.

2 [Kerr,] "The New Problem of Africa", *RT*, June 1927, p 457.

3 Kerr to Duncan, 13 April 1926, Lothian Papers 222, fols 130-31.

4 "Native Policy in South Africa", *RT*, June 1936, pp 540-41.



African influence northwards, which Union was thought to facilitate.' Such a possibility remained a strong element in subsequent Round Table speculation. In 1927 Kerr produced a report on the "African Highlands" for the Rhodes Trust, in which he argued that

"except for the coastal belt along the Indian ocean and certain lowlying valleys . . . the whole of [the region from Cape to Nairobi] . . . seems inevitably destined to be colonised in greater or lesser degree by the white man".

South African "experience" should guide British policy; South African influence was "bound to increase".<sup>2</sup> Two years later, the Moot discussed "the advisability of establishing an African Council, or some form of regular consultation between the British and South African Governments on East and Central African questions".<sup>2</sup> As late as 1946 the editor of the *Round Table* was reporting that "our feeling here is that the Union must soon assume the status of the predominant power of all Africa".<sup>4</sup>

The Protectorates were the most obvious starting-point for such schemes. The "Kindergarten" had expected those territories to be transferred to South Africa as part of unification, but pressure from Britain ensured that responsibility remained with the British High Commissioner. Hertzog's government requested a reconsideration in 1925, but it was only after 1933 that the Round Tablers themselves believed the question to be amenable to a solution in South Africa's favour.

The first shot in the Round Table's campaign came in September 1934,

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<sup>1</sup> B Williams, *The Selborne Memorandum* (Oxford, 1925), pp 140-45.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr, "The African Highlands", 25 Feb 1927, Lothian Papers 83, fols 4-23.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, 16 May 1929, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Morrah to Kidd, 27 Feb 1946, (SA file,) RT (O) Papers.

with the printing of a South African article which claimed virtually unanimous support amongst white South Africans for the proposal.<sup>1</sup> Six months later, Horsfall announced the Moot's wholehearted agreement with the proposal. Much was made of the "complete economic and cultural dependence of the protectorates on the Union", and it was claimed that "South Africa . . . has not shown any lack of ability to find constructive solutions of great problems".<sup>2</sup>

Curtis was in South Africa for the Imperial Press Conference at the time the *Round Table* was declaring its position. He reiterated the latter's arguments in a widely-publicised speech in Cape Town.<sup>3</sup> He was "genuinely surprised" by the reaction.<sup>4</sup> On the boat back to England, Sir Roderick Jones reported to Smuts that he and Curtis were the only press delegates in favour of transfer.<sup>5</sup> Back in England, Curtis encountered further "intensity of feeling" on the subject, even in *All Souls*.<sup>6</sup> Undeterred, he composed a series of articles for *The Times* setting out the case for transfer, quoting Bishop Gore to the effect that "people tend to live up to the best opinion we are able to hold of them". Curtis played down the natives' views on the subject, because they were "not yet able to make major decisions in their own interests".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Protectorates and the Union", *RT*, Sept 1934, pp 785-801.

<sup>2</sup> [Horsfall,] "The South African Protectorates", *RT*, March 1935, pp 318-23.

<sup>3</sup> Reported inter alia in the *Cape Times*, 23 March 1935.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Feetham, 26 March 1935, Curtis Papers 91, fol 140. Sir William Clark and Sir Herbert Stanley were amongst Curtis's critics.

<sup>5</sup> Jones to Smuts, 3 April 1935, *ibid.* fols 161-62.

<sup>6</sup> Curtis to Duncan, 16 April 1935, *ibid.* fols 178-79.

<sup>7</sup> *The Times*, 13, 14 and 15 May 1935.

Curtis's three *Times* articles were answered by a single one from Margery Perham, who, unlike Curtis, had actually visited the Protectorates. Perham disputed the whole basis of Curtis's thesis, arguing that there had been a "steady depreciation" in South African policy since the Union, that "liberal" South Africans were opposed to transfer and that the "central fact" was the clear and reasonable "opposition of the tribes". In a telling comment on her adversary's magnanimity, she observed that Curtis

"advocates, as always, that teaching of political responsibility by trust which will strengthen the Empire with those very forces of nationalism otherwise possibly destructive. Is this liberalism to be applied only to white races?"<sup>1</sup>

An even more devastating critique of Curtis's views was put forward by V. K. Macmillan, who was refused space in *The Times*; eventually Curtis brought the correspondence to a halt by declaring that he and Macmillan were "simply wasting each other's time in trying to convince one another".<sup>2</sup> It was clear that Curtis had lost the argument, and he was reduced to complaining about "extremists . . . writing as though South Africans had horns and tails".<sup>3</sup> An elaboration of his and Perham's articles was published later in the year under the title *The Protectorates of South Africa*; by then, however, much of the heat had gone out of the issue.

A similar lack of success awaited the Round Tablers' hopes for South African incorporation of Southern Rhodesia. Here there were two complicating factors: first that the territory was home to a small but

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 16 May 1935. Cf Perham's previous articles on the Protectorates, *The Times*, 5 and 6 July 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Macmillan, 30 May 1935, Curtis Papers 91, fol 268; cf Macmillan to Curtis, 16 and 19 May 1935, *ibid.*, fols 251-52 and 253.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Smuts, 5 June 1935, Curtis Papers 91, fols 287-90.

cohesive group of white settlers, most of whom were averse to any hint of Afrikaner domination, and secondly that a strand in official British thinking saw the existence of Southern Rhodesia as a useful lever on South Africa itself, either as a bribe or as a counterweight.'

The belief that "the ultimate destiny of [Southern Rhodesia] is to form part of the Union"<sup>2</sup> was asserted right up to the referendum of November 1922 and the assumption of power by the colony's own legislature in October 1923. (Ironically, Malcolm made the latter development possible by negotiating away the Company's claims for compensation.) Thereafter, the strength of feeling against incorporation was admitted.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, South African "experience" was still held to be applicable. In 1932, for instance, the *Round Table* suggested the need for segregationism and "confining the native vote . . . to the native institutions", the Cape system being merely a relic from a "time when public worship of the franchise was at its height".<sup>4</sup> As late as 1935, Curtis was writing to Smuts that his "dream" was still "the completion of the Union of South Africa", from the Cape to the Zambezi.<sup>5</sup> By then, however, such a possibility was highly unlikely, not least because of the independent aspirations of white Rhodesians.

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<sup>1</sup> See M Chanock, *Unconsummated Union: Britain, Rhodesia and South Africa, 1900-45* (Manchester, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> "South Africa: The Southern Rhodesia Commission", *RT*, March 1920, p 464.

<sup>3</sup> See, eg, [Sir Drummond Chaplin,] "Southern Rhodesia under Responsible Government", *RT*, Sept 1926, pp 757-70.

<sup>4</sup> "Southern Africa: The Situation in Southern Rhodesia", *RT*, Dec 1932, pp 211-26.

<sup>5</sup> Curtis to Smuts, 5 June 1935, Curtis Papers 91, fols 287-90.



### East Africa

Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Uganda aroused little interest amongst Round Tablers before the Second World War. Tanganyika was briefly a subject of concern in 1917-19, the Round Tablers being anxious first that an area of such "great importance to the future of South Africa" should be kept by the Empire, and secondly that large-scale Indian immigration should not be allowed.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter the Round Table showed little further interest in the territory, except (occasionally) to refer to it as evidence of the high moral purpose animating British rule in the tropics.<sup>2</sup>

Kenya raised an altogether more complicated series of problems. British opinion was vitally interested in the colony, stimulated on the one hand by the romantic frontier ideology of the settlers and their allies, and on the other by the critical analyses of Norman Leys and William McGregor Ross. During the 1920s Kenya became a testing-ground for rival interpretations of Imperial trusteeship: the "Achilles' heel" of the Empire, as Dove put it.<sup>3</sup>

The issue which first kindled the Round Table's interest in Kenya was Indian migration. The restrictions placed on Indians in the colony generated intense criticism from India itself. One correspondent asserted that such criticism was the work of "extremists, who, I believe (though it is difficult to prove), are affected by Bolshevism".<sup>4</sup> The impassioned interventions of such respectable Round Table contacts as Srinivasa Sastri

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<sup>1</sup> Feetham's memorandum, 2 Oct 1917, Lothian Papers 475, fol 1; Kerr to A Chamberlain, 28 Feb 1917 and 7 March 1917, Lothian Papers 32, fols 2-4 and 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> See, eg, Coupland's article in *The Times*, 3 Oct 1928.

<sup>3</sup> Dove to Grigg, 30 May 1925, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002.

<sup>4</sup> [A G Baker?,] from Nakuru, 6 Aug 1921, Lothian Papers 17, fols 30-39.



and Sir Malcolm Hailey gave the lie to that particular idea.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, far from condemning the discrimination faced by Indians, the Round Tablers threw their weight behind it. As early as 1917, Kerr suggested that the best way of rationalising restrictions against Indians was as "the case of the Kaffir".<sup>2</sup> A *Round Table* article of June 1923 anticipated the "Devonshire Declaration" by calling for the ending of Indian immigration "in the interests of the African". It also called for "sanitary segregation" and a commitment against Indian enfranchisement.<sup>3</sup>

The full implications of the "paramount duty of trusteeship" enunciated in the 1923 White Paper were not commented on by the *Round Table*, nor, apparently, immediately grasped by its editorial Moot. Certainly Grigg, who was appointed Governor in May 1925, saw no reason why "trusteeship" could not be exercised as well by the white settlers as by officials subordinate to London.

One of the tasks which Amery entrusted to Grigg was the "closer union" of Kenya with Uganda and Tanganyika. Almost immediately Grigg asked for the Moot's help in pushing the issue. At first the Moot was enthusiastic, although Dawson was deputed to warn against the danger of seeming to lead from Britain. "Could you not get Sandford [editor of the *East African Standard*] to ventilate the subject and then have this local opinion reported here, so as to give us something to work upon?"<sup>4</sup> A "secret" subcommittee of the Moot was inaugurated in order to advise and

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<sup>1</sup> See Sastri to Grigg, 3 Sept 1921, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999; extract from Hailey's letter, 18 July 1923, Brand Papers, box 70.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to A Chamberlain, 7 March 1917, Lothian Papers 32, fols 5-7.

<sup>3</sup> [Dove and Rice,] "Kenya", *RT*, June 1923, pp 507-29. See generally Robert G Gregory, *India and East Africa* (Oxford, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> Dawson to Grigg, 20 Oct 1925, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002.

assist Grigg, and it was suggested that Amery appoint him High Commissioner for all three territories.<sup>1</sup>

Once Grigg was in Kenya, the Round Tablers continued to correspond, although more fitfully than their initial arrangements suggested. The main task of advising and supporting Grigg was taken over by J H Oldham, a good friend and close ally of many of the Moot, Curtis in particular. Oldham shared Grigg's concern to prevent the emergence of a gulf between the white settlers and opinion in Britain, and to establish the framework of "closer union".<sup>2</sup> As a first step, he suggested the creation of a Research Department for East Africa, whose purpose would be to help control "the forces that are threatening in the long run to make the task of civilization in Africa impossible".<sup>3</sup>

Feetham was enlisted to head the prospective department, his political masters Hertzog and Roos appreciating "the point that for the Government of a British territory in Eastern Africa to turn to South Africa for advice . . . was . . . worthy of every encouragement".<sup>4</sup> At the Moot's suggestion, Oldham wrote two articles for *The Times* in which he floated the idea, incidentally claiming that Africans would benefit less from a "transient" class of administrators than from "the continuous stimulus of the presence in their midst of a more advanced and progressive

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<sup>1</sup> Feetham to Grigg, 5 Nov 1925, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002.

<sup>2</sup> Oldham to Grigg, 8 Sept 1925 and further correspondence, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Oldham, "Research in East Africa" (Sept 1925); Oldham to Grigg, 28 July 1926, *ibid.* "'Research' is apt to be misleading in its suggestion and I personally always treat it merely as the most convenient label", Oldham later wrote: to Kerr, 18 Feb 1927, Lothian Papers 83, fol 58.

<sup>4</sup> Feetham to Grigg, 24 May 1926, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm.

civilization".<sup>1</sup> The Round Tablers further arranged for Oldham to put the case for research to Amery, Tom Jones and others at an All Souls weekend.<sup>2</sup>

Grigg's hopes for an early implementation of Oldham's scheme and of "closer union" foundered on the opposition of the Governor of Tanganyika, obstructionism from within the Colonial Office, and prevarication within the Cabinet. Grigg's sympathy for the aspirations of the white settlers helped matters little, and strained his alignment with Oldham and some of the Moot. His proposals for "Imperial Policy on East Africa" alarmed Oldham by their insistence on settler self-government without adequate safeguards for native interests.<sup>3</sup> Coupland believed that Grigg was trying to "stampede the Cabinet and get a pro-Delamere policy adopted".<sup>4</sup> After "a good many deliberations"<sup>5</sup>, Kerr wrote an article for the *Round Table* which insisted that any East African legislature "should be so constituted as to represent from the start not only the white electorate, but also the other races" (albeit by white appointees). Moreover, attention was drawn to the "undoubted evils" which would result from the "undiluted transfer of authority to a small body of white settlers".<sup>6</sup>

Grigg suffered further setbacks, not the least of which was an unexpected majority of the Hilton Young Commission (including Oldham

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 9 and 10 June 1926; for the Moot, see Oldham to Grigg, 8 June 1926, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002.

<sup>2</sup> Oldham to Grigg, 15 June 1926, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Grigg, "Imperial Policy in East Africa" [Feb 1927]; Oldham to Grigg, 9 March and 10 April 1927, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> K Middlemas (ed), *Thomas Jones' Whitehall Diary*, vol II (London, 1969), p 171.

<sup>5</sup> Kerr to Sir John Chancellor, 2 June 1927, Lothian Papers 227, fol 105.

<sup>6</sup> [Kerr,] "The New Problem of Africa", *RT*, June 1927, pp 447-72.

himself) reporting its agreement with the 1923 "native paramountcy" doctrine.<sup>1</sup> The advent of a Labour Government in 1929 spelt the end of Grigg's hopes for a move either on "closer union" or on settler self-government. By now British opinion was firmly set against any concession to the settlers. Dawson reported to Grigg that he was being inundated by anti-settler "extremism".<sup>2</sup>

Grigg felt betrayed by the Round Table's lack of support for his East African policy, especially after an article of his was radically amended in order to take into account the Moot's "differences of opinion".<sup>3</sup> In 1935 he persuaded the Moot to publish a Kenyan settler's attack on the colony's "rigid, unsympathetic and out-dated" form of government.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the Moot as a whole found itself unable to take any clear line on Kenya, and therefore took none. The attraction of both imperial creeds struggling for supremacy in that colony was simply too great for one or the other to be decisively abandoned.

### British Migration

Early advertising for the *Round Table* assured prospective subscribers that one of the objects of the Review would be "to encourage a sound system of emigration from the Mother Country to His Majesty's Dominions

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1 Grigg thought the Commission "very badly mis-handled": Grigg to Archbishop Davidson, 18 Feb 1929, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1002.

2 Dawson to Grigg, 25 March 1930, *ibid.*

3 Dove to Grigg, 5 Aug 1931, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.

4 [Lord Francis Scott,] "Kenya: The Settlers' Case" ["contributed"], *RT*, Dec 1935, pp 82-97.



oversea".<sup>1</sup> Quite what constituted such a "sound system" was not made explicit at the time; nor, indeed, was it to be. The superficially straightforward issue of British migration was, in fact, a minefield, involving such delicate issues as Dominion autonomy, State intervention and class relations, as well as more intractable problems of birth-rates and living standards. The Moot frequently affirmed its commitment to supporting increased British migration to the Dominions<sup>2</sup>, but was seldom able to match its commitment with constructive proposals.

One problem was the younger Round Tablers' reluctance (in contrast to Milner's and Amery's eagerness) to contemplate State intervention and subsidies: they accepted the Empire Settlement Act of 1922, but believed that it represented the utmost "limit . . . [of] State action".<sup>3</sup>

An even thornier set of problems was raised by the question whether British and Dominion interests in the matter were identical. The author of a 1922 New Zealand article proposed as a general principle that "in matters that are not vital to Imperial existence and honour . . . it is the plain duty of our rulers to study our own country first". It might be true that Britain had a "surplus" population, but New Zealand's capacity to absorb immigrants was limited "to a few thousands a year".<sup>4</sup> An article from Australia the same year emphasised that both farmers and industrial workers

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<sup>1</sup> *The Round Table, Preliminary Issue*, 25 July 1910, copy in Rhodes House Library.

<sup>2</sup> See especially [Dove,] "The Migration of the Races", *RT*, March 1921 pp 241-74, and [Hodson,] "Empire Migration", *RT*, Dec 1934, pp 60-78.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "The Imperial Conference", *RT*, Sept 1923, p 701. For Milner and Amery, see Stephen Constantine (ed) *Emigrants and Empire* (Manchester, 1990). Judging by the results of the 1922 Act, the Round Tablers' scepticism is understandable.

<sup>4</sup> "New Zealand", *RT*, Sept 1922, pp 912-30.



viewed schemes for large-scale immigration as designed to undermine their own living standards.<sup>1</sup>

The theme that the Dominions could not be expected to be dumping-grounds for Britain's "malcontents" continued to predominate throughout the interwar years. The problems of commodity-based economies reinforced the Dominions' reluctance to accept large numbers of immigrants. An Australian article of 1936 was fairly representative in concluding that the whole assisted migration policy had been "costly and strewn with failures"; the moral was that "the type of migrant who might fail in the United Kingdom but succeed in the Dominions is now rare".<sup>2</sup>

The deathblow to large-scale emigration schemes was dealt by a factor over which neither Dominion nor British statesmen had any control: the declining British birth-rate. A special article in 1937 estimated that Britain's population would be less than 20 million by the year 2037. "Will the Dominions be ready to take a larger share in the burden of Imperial defence? Will the United Kingdom still be able to bear the cost of maintaining the strength of an Imperial Power?" These were questions which the *Round Table* could put, but not answer.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it was clear that any hopes that Britain would be able to continue to provide a stream of migrants to the Dominions were now entirely unrealistic. Indeed, the *Round Table* now expected the stream to go into reverse.

"Interchange of population is valuable in itself, since it invigorates the individual migrant and

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<sup>1</sup> "Australia", *RT*, March 1922, pp 405-22.

<sup>2</sup> "Empire Migration: an Australian View", *RT*, Sept 1936, pp 737-47. For one of the "failures", see "Australia: the British Settlers in Victoria", *RT*, Dec 1933, pp 203-08.

<sup>3</sup> [D H MacLachlan,] "The Birth-Rate and the Empire", *RT*, March 1937, pp 308-18.

brings in new blood where otherwise the stock might stagnate and decline. This consideration applies . . . equally to a movement of people from the newer countries back to Great Britain as to an opposite flow".<sup>1</sup>

The language had changed little since 1910, but within a generation the problems of Empire migration had changed beyond all recognition.

### Imperial Trade and Tariffs

Throughout the interwar period, the Round Table remained cautious on the question of tariffs and Imperial preferences. Milner and Dawson were both convinced of the need for protection, and Grigg and Hitchens were both supporters of Imperial preference (although opponents of Amery's "mixing up" the Empire in the arguments for domestic protection<sup>2</sup>). Others in the Moot (especially Brand, Curtis and Kerr) continued to believe that British interests were best served by free trade, and that trade itself was a very uncertain foundation for Imperial integration.

Some attempt to mediate between Imperial preference and free trade was again made in 1923, in an article by Kerr.

"It is very uncertain whether a protected market in Great Britain alone would be sufficient and whether the disadvantages . . . would not outweigh the advantages. But . . . would not the whole Commonwealth as a home free trade market, with some uniform measure of protection from the huge competitive agencies of the modern world, be very different?"

Kerr thus outlined a prospect which was not on the agenda of any of the political parties: "free trade within the Commonwealth" (ie, Britain and the Dominions), protected from the outside world, but with no internal

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<sup>1</sup> [Hodson,] "Empire Migration", *RT*, Dec 1934, p 61.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Bailey, 24 April 1924, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1001.

tariffs.<sup>1</sup> The 1923 Conference agreed a series of preferential measures - not the "Commonwealth free trade" for which Kerr argued - but was immediately followed by the general election. The Moot expressed the hope that Labour might carry through the previous government's Conference commitments "on grounds of Imperial policy".<sup>2</sup>

Grigg, who was at this time engaged in an attempt to build a "National Liberal" caucus on a platform of Imperial preference, declared himself dissatisfied with the extent of the Round Table's conversion. He thought it would be "a splendid thing to get the Round Table concentrated once again on a definite policy to be secured within a few years". Like Chamberlain earlier, he identified Curtis, who was "always afraid of the tariff question", as the root of obstruction.<sup>3</sup> Curtis was not the only sceptic, however. The most that a majority of the Moot would commit itself to was "a system of inter-imperial trade which would at the same time encourage primary production in the Dominions and industrial development in Great Britain": again, "Commonwealth free trade".<sup>4</sup>

The economic crisis which followed the Wall Street Crash produced a surge of "huddling to the flag" protectionism, as Hodson observed.<sup>5</sup> The Moot was perturbed by Beaverbrook's "garden wall" scheme (and especially by

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1 [Kerr,] "The Imperial Conference", *RT*, Sept 1923 (pp 683-711), pp 700 ff. Kerr here followed the lines agreed by the Moot: Minutes of RT meeting, 7 June 1923, RT (O) Papers.

2 Minutes of RT meeting, 19 Dec 1923, RT (O) Papers; [Kerr,] "Afterthoughts on the Imperial Conference", *RT*, March 1924, pp 225-41.

3 Grigg to Bailey, 19 Feb 1925, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1001.

4 Dove to Horsfall, 26 June 1925, Lothian Papers 19, fols 260-64.

5 Hodson to Dove, 25 Oct 1931, Lothian Papers 259, fols 507-11.

its attempt to bring in the colonies)<sup>1</sup>. Harold Butler, who wrote a *Round Table* article on the subject, thought that "tariffs are a very two-edged tool for an exporting country".<sup>2</sup> Moreover, "from a constitutional point of view . . . the idea of economic unity is a retrograde step", implying colonial dependence and a new centralisation.<sup>3</sup>

With the Ottawa Conference approaching, the *Round Table* warned against the prospect of an "Empire still divided by high tariff walls, and ringed about by an almost unscalable barrier": such "would be an Empire doomed to decay if not disruption". Tariffs, "far from being in themselves a national asset, are an unfortunate necessity"; any tariff arrangements would have to leave the way open for preferential agreements outside the Empire, and have as their aim "a net lowering of tariff barriers". Moreover, "the use of Imperial sentiment to manufacture commercial pacts will destroy the sentiment and leave only the pacts".<sup>4</sup>

Hodson believed that there would be "a great deal of disappointment" with the results of the economic Conference. The agreements which were made (some of which were "very silly") would do little to secure a worldwide reduction of tariffs, which alone would secure a real return to prosperity.<sup>5</sup> The *Round Table* was marginally more optimistic, suggesting that on balance there had been a net reduction of tariffs. Nevertheless, there was a danger in subjecting the "mutual relations of the Commonwealth"

1 Dove to H Butler, 26 July 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fol 620.

2 Butler to Dove, 7 July 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fols 605-06.

3 [Butler,] "Imperial Economic Unity", *RT*, Sept 1930, pp 745-65.

4 [Hodson,] "Imperial Preference", *RT*, March 1932, pp 246-65.

5 Hodson to Dove, 5 Sept 1932, Lothian Papers 267, fols 735-39.



to expectations which could not be fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

Hodson's caution was justified. Writing in the *Round Table* of June 1937 he examined the figures for British trade after Ottawa, concluding that what little diversion of trade to the Empire had taken place was directly attributable to Britain's decreased purchasing power, and a consequent concentration on food and raw materials. Imperial preference was only worthwhile if it secured "the maximum freedom of trade within the Empire itself" and "a substantial liberation of trade with foreign countries". In neither respect had Ottawa been a notable success.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Irish Free State

Curtis remained closely involved in Irish affairs until 1924, as the Colonial Secretary's "particular Private Secretary . . . for Irish matters".<sup>3</sup> In this capacity, he played an important part in ensuring that British constitutional procedure was observed in the enactment of a Free State Constitution.<sup>4</sup> The latter contained many elements foreign to the Dominion model, as Harrison Moore pointed out in a *Round Table* article; nevertheless, its framework was unmistakably that of a Dominion rather than of a Republic.<sup>5</sup>

With regard to the constitutional question, Curtis's attitude was

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<sup>1</sup> [Macdonald, based on Hodson's notes,] "Ottawa and the Trade Agreements", *RT*, Dec 1932, pp 44-63.

<sup>2</sup> [Hodson,] "Empire Trade and World Trade", *RT*, June 1937, pp 514-17.

<sup>3</sup> Grigg to L Christie, 30 April 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999.

<sup>4</sup> See John McColgan, "Implementing the 1921 Treaty: Lionel Curtis and Constitutional Procedure", *Irish Historical Studies*, vol 20 (1977), pp 312-33.

<sup>5</sup> [Moore,] "Ireland: an Australian Impression", *RT*, Sept 1923, pp 782-804.



largely unhelpful to the Free State Government. On other questions he tended to be more conciliatory, hoping that fair treatment by Britain would lead to "some new political synthesis".<sup>1</sup> Writing to Bailey in January 1922, he asserted that "ninety per cent" of Irishmen were "potentially sane", and only ten per cent "incurably mad".<sup>2</sup>

With the outbreak of civil war in Ireland the Moot, unsurprisingly, threw what weight it had solidly behind the pro-Treaty forces. The *Round Table* poured scorn on the rebels as a small knot of "irresponsible zealots" who backed up their "new theory of divine right with the rifle and revolver".<sup>3</sup> From his position inside the Colonial Office, Curtis pressed for financial and material support for Cosgrave's government.<sup>4</sup>

Many on the right wing of British politics - including erstwhile allies of the Moot such as Lords Selborne and Salisbury - professed to see in the fact of civil war proof of the Irish people's unfitness for self-government.<sup>5</sup> Curtis suspected ulterior designs for the reassertion of British control over southern Ireland, a prospect which he viewed with dismay.<sup>6</sup> He urged the British Government to be scrupulous in carrying out its own undertakings, especially as those who constituted the Free State

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Devonshire, 11 Dec 1922, quoted in Paul Canning, *British Policy Towards Ireland, 1921-41* (Oxford, 1985), p 73. See generally pp 70-91.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Bailey, 7 Jan 1922, Curtis Papers 89, fols 69-70.

<sup>3</sup> [Dove and Curtis,] "Ireland at the Cross-Roads", *RT*, June 1922, p 507.

<sup>4</sup> Keith Middlemas (ed), *Thomas Jones' Whitehall Diary: Vol III: Ireland, 1918-25* (London, 1971), pp 218-19.

<sup>5</sup> J J Lee, *Ireland, 1912-85* (Cambridge, 1989), pp 143-44.

<sup>6</sup> Middlemas, *op cit*, pp 200-01, 220; [Curtis,] "The Irish Boundary Question", *RT*, Dec 1924, pp 35-37.

Government had "risked their own lives" for the Treaty, and had "kept it in the letter and in the spirit".<sup>1</sup> A breakdown of the Treaty, he asserted, would mean "certain war", and one "which cannot be terminated by another treaty because no one in Ireland will ever trust us again".<sup>2</sup>

The test of Britain's willingness to abide by the spirit of the Treaty came in 1924, when the Free State Government requested the implementation of Article XII, which provided for a three-man Boundary Commission to modify the border between North and South. Initially Curtis feared the revival of old antagonisms, and hoped that "the basis of a settlement will be found in our securing a promise of inaction" in return for British inaction on financial claims.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the Free State Government could hardly afford to give up its one major bargaining-counter at such an early stage.

Curtis's influence was now sufficient to secure the appointment of Feetham ("the ablest of Dominion judges" and "constitutionally of conservative temperament") as Chairman, in May 1924.<sup>4</sup> Problems arose when Craig refused to appoint a Northern Ireland Commissioner. Horne, Curzon and others urged support for this latest example of Ulster intractability. Eventually, with strong support from the *Round Table* - which claimed that "the honour of the [British] nation" was at stake<sup>5</sup> - the British

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1 Curtis to Churchill, 19 Aug 1924, Curtis Papers 89, fols 76-83.

2 Curtis to Churchill, 31 Aug 1924, *ibid.* fols 84-87.

3 Middlemas, *op cit.*, p 228 (31 March 1924).

4 Middlemas, *op cit.*, p 232 (27 May 1924); Curtis to Churchill, 19 Aug 1924, Curtis Papers 89, fols 76-83.

5 [Dove,] "The Irish Boundary Question", *RT*, Sept 1924, p 776. Dove's article was based on Curtis's notes: see Curtis Papers 90, fols 10-23 [summer 1924].

Government rushed through legislation enabling it to appoint J R Fisher. Further problems arose over the interpretation of the Boundary Commission's terms of reference. On this issue, the *Round Table* steered a middle path, insisting that the Boundary Commission should itself be the judge of its own powers.<sup>1</sup>

As Chairman of a Commission whose two other members were certain to differ, Feetham possessed an unusual freedom. Nevertheless, the "conservative temperament" to which Curtis referred ensured that he took a very limited view of the Commission's mandate, placing great emphasis on "economic and geographic" constraints and on the wishes of (Protestant) landlords as opposed to (Catholic) tenants. As a result, the Commission's proposals amounted to little more than a rationalisation of the existing boundary.<sup>2</sup> Leaks of the Commission's findings created outrage in the Free State, stalled the Commission's work, and paved the way for a tripartite agreement to drop all claims (except land annuities). The *Round Table* reported these events with equanimity, confining its comments to the hopeful observation that an agreement reached by all parties would prove more lasting than one imposed by a Commission, however fair and impartial.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of the wrangle over the appointment of the Commission, Churchill reported to Curtis a "growing belief" among Conservatives "that with Ulster strongly fortified and Southern Ireland a recognised

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1 [Curtis,] "The Irish Boundary Question", *RT*, Dec 1924, pp 27 ff.

2 See *Report of the Irish Boundary Commission, 1925* (Shannon, 1969), especially pp 32-68 (Feetham's Memo on Article XII) and vii - xxii (Introduction, by Geoffrey J Hand); also G J Hand, "MacNeill and the Boundary Commission", in F X Martin and F J Byrne (eds), *The Scholar Revolutionary* (Shannon, 1973).

3 [Bourdillon and Horgan,] "Ireland: the Boundary Settlement and After", *RT*, March 1926, pp 344-67.

foreign nation, we should be in a stronger position than at present".<sup>1</sup> This was by no means the view taken by the Moot. Curtis had hoped to "use the agency of Ulster" to secure a moderate settlement for the whole of Ireland. In the June 1922 *Round Table* he again argued that the separation of Ulster exacerbated Britain's problems by increasing the relative preponderance of "extremists" in the rest of Ireland, and by furnishing them with new sources of grievance against the "Imperial factor".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Ulster's resistance to incorporation was clearly strengthened by the very fact which made it such an urgent desideratum for the *Round Table*: the resurgence of Republicanism.

In the aftermath of civil war, the magazine allowed its readers to assume the gradual extinction of Republicanism in Ireland. "The real truth, always disguised and never frankly admitted, is that the great majority of the Irish people never wanted a republic."<sup>3</sup> The rise of de Valera's Fianna Fáil party was thus something for which *Round Table* readers were not well-prepared. The magazine's Irish correspondent J J Horgan lost few opportunities to denigrate de Valera's character and political ability. He also emphasised that, with the changes in Dominion status brought about since 1921, Ireland enjoyed "all the advantages and none of the disadvantages of a republic".<sup>4</sup>

Fianna Fáil's electoral victory of 1932 naturally alarmed the *Round Table*. The Moot took the now unusual step of printing its own

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill to Curtis, 8 Sept 1924, Curtis Papers 89, fols 89-90.

<sup>2</sup> [Dove and Curtis,] "Ireland at the Cross-Roads", *RT*, June 1922, pp 524-25.

<sup>3</sup> "The Irish Scene 1925", *RT*, Sept 1925, p 753.

<sup>4</sup> [Horgan,] "Events in the Free State", *RT*, March 1930, p 368.



observations on developments in Ireland, stating categorically that de Valera's constitutional intentions were "legally impossible", and that Britain's case on land annuities was "beyond dispute". If de Valera carried out his promise to abolish the oath, Britain should retaliate, by cancelling preferences for Irish goods, and refusing to negotiate further agreements at the Ottawa conference. Meanwhile, Horgan emphasised the importance of Britain taking a stand, in order to undermine de Valera's popular support.<sup>1</sup>

Horgan initially expected Fianna Fáil's imminent demise, but the Free State elections of early 1933 marked something of a turning-point. By the end of the same year, he was describing the (short-lived) coalescence of opposition groups as having merely "saved [them] . . . from individual destruction".<sup>2</sup> Horgan now adopted a more conciliatory line towards de Valera, drawing distinctions between his views and those of Mary MacSwiney and the IRA, and welcoming his disavowal of the use of force to end partition.<sup>3</sup> Horgan also moved closer to de Valera in his assessment of North-South relations, calling on Ulster's leadership to show "sufficient imagination and courage to face and decide this momentous issue".<sup>4</sup> In December 1934 and March 1935 the Round Table tackled the Ulster question

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<sup>1</sup> [Dove and Horgan,] "Ireland and the Treaty", *RT*, June 1932, pp 489-518, including "Editorial Preface", pp 489-92, and Appendix, "The Economic Position", pp 517-18 (showing Ireland's dependence on British markets).

<sup>2</sup> [Horgan,] "Mr de Valera's Objective", *RT*, Dec 1933, p 172.

<sup>3</sup> [Horgan,] "The Irish Free State: Quo Vadis?", *RT*, March 1934, pp 368 ff.

<sup>4</sup> [Horgan,] "The Victory of Mr de Valera", *RT*, March 1933, p 306.



head-on, with the publication of articles from Horgan and Arthur Black (a member of Stormont), putting the case for and against reunification.<sup>1</sup>

On the central issue of Anglo-Irish relations, Horgan urged the British Government to underline the Dominions' equality by giving an assurance that force would not be used to prevent secession. This

"would immediately clear the air and free Mr de Valera's Government either to declare a republic . . . or to confess that they did not intend to do so . . . . In either event . . . such a pronouncement would remove once and for all the Irish belief that Ireland is under external compulsion in the matter".<sup>2</sup>

The Moot was divided over whether Britain should issue such an assurance.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the *Round Table* accepted de Valera's successive amendments to the constitution, no doubt convinced (as Horgan now repeatedly emphasised) that the alternative to de Valera was an Irish government even more "extreme". De Valera's seizure of the Abdication Crisis as the moment to remove the last vestiges of British suzerainty Horgan described as a gesture "of little importance": "a bit of comparatively harmless make-believe", after which "everything remains much as it was before".<sup>4</sup> That the Moot acquiesced in Horgan's assessment may be inferred from Kenneth Bailey's article of June 1937, which asserted that "nobody in the rest of the Commonwealth would wish to insist on strict compliance with . . . constitutional forms . . . as the price of the Free State's membership of

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1 [Horgan,] "Ireland and the Commonwealth", *RT*, Dec 1934, pp 21-43, and [Black,] "Ulster and the Irish Problem", *RT*, March 1935, pp 249-65. The Moot itself did not take a line one way or the other.

2 [Horgan,] "Ireland and the Commonwealth", *RT*, Dec 1934, pp 38-39.

3 Minutes of RT meeting, 11 April 1935, RT (O) Papers.

4 [Horgan,] "The Irish Republican Kingdom", *RT*, March 1937, p 355; [Horgan,] "Re-enter Ireland", *RT*, March 1938, pp 312-13.

this free association of equal nations".<sup>1</sup>

Despite some hesitation, the Round Table, like the British Government, generally pursued a policy of "appeasement" towards Ireland between the wars.<sup>2</sup> This reflected a pragmatic appraisal of the options available. On the one hand, Britain lacked the physical and especially moral force to impose its own terms on Ireland; on the other, Britain's real interests were more likely to be secured by compromise than by confrontation. Neville Chamberlain's decision to pursue the path of negotiation, despite virulent criticism from the right of his party, was applauded by the *Round Table*. The resulting Agreement of April 1938 was welcomed as closing "a humiliating chapter in the history of Anglo-Irish relations".<sup>3</sup>

#### Dominion Status and Imperial Co-operation

As has been seen, the Round Tablers continued to believe that Imperial federation afforded the only permanent basis for the continuation of the Empire. They did not see their attempts at orchestrating a campaign in 1910-17 as a last-ditch effort to keep the Empire united. On the contrary, they continued to believe that federation was the ideal towards which the Empire was progressing. The Empire was like southern Africa in 1902-10, its component parts jealous of their own autonomy, and only slowly groping towards some realisation of the need for institutionalised unity.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [K Bailey,] "The King and His Peoples", *RT*, June 1937, p 480.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Canning, *op cit*, p ix and *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> [Horgan,] "The Anglo-Irish Agreement", *RT*, June 1938, pp 526-27.

<sup>4</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 21 July 1917, Lothian Papers 33, fols 19-21.

Co-operation was "unquestionably the proper line of advance for the times",<sup>1</sup> "the only practicable policy".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it was still only an "intermediate" stage. The Round Tablers

"have always believed, and they still believe, that sooner or later, after the equality of status of the Dominions had been fully recognised, necessity and not propaganda would force a conscious movement towards constitutional unity - other than that which the Crown itself gives".<sup>3</sup>

The Round Table thus accepted, without enthusiasm, but with a keen sense of realities, the "new orthodoxy" of co-operation. Nevertheless, they were quick to point out "the essential inadequacy of our present system of Imperial relations". Taken as a whole, the actual machinery for consultation and co-operation between Britain and the Dominions was inferior to that between any of them and a foreign nation, as provided by the League. There was an "enthusiasm for form", but little of substance.<sup>4</sup>

Until 1921, the Round Tablers still expected the calling of a special constitutional convention, as envisaged by Resolution IX of 1917.<sup>5</sup> In its absence, the main piece of co-operative machinery was still the Imperial Conference. Again contrary to the resolutions of 1917, this body quickly

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<sup>1</sup> [Grigg,] "The British Commonwealth of Nations in 1921", *RT*, Dec 1920, p 11.

<sup>2</sup> "Draft Circular to the Dominion Groups", 22 Dec 1920, Lothian Papers 17, fol 17.

<sup>3</sup> [Grigg,] "The British Commonwealth of Nations in 1921", p 11.

<sup>4</sup> [Kerr,] "Afterthoughts on the Imperial Conference", *RT*, March 1924, pp 225-41.

<sup>5</sup> [Malcolm,] "The Meeting of the Imperial Cabinet", *RT*, June 1921, pp 549 ff; cf Amery to Grigg, 24 June 1921, urging Lloyd George to set up a committee (with Milner as chairman, and himself a member) to prepare for a convention: Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999.

reverted to being a biennial, triennial and finally quadrennial institution. Its value, for the Round Tablers, consequently diminished. The Conferences of 1921 and 1923 were "not far short of a failure", unwilling to "deal with the real issues which confront the Empire", and more concerned with mere "junketing and speeches".<sup>1</sup>

The Moot put forward various proposals for improving the machinery of co-operation. Many of these were the same as the proposals put forward before the war. In 1923, for instance, Kerr suggested annual Conferences, the creation of an Imperial Secretariat, joint Anglo-Dominion delegates at all major conferences, and "quasi-diplomatic" communication between London and the Dominions by means of Agents-General and High Commissioners.<sup>2</sup> The Moot also favoured extending Dominion representation in foreign capitals: "the more direct the contact of all parts of the Commonwealth with the realities of the international world the better".<sup>3</sup>

Despite such promptings, the machinery of Imperial co-operation remained largely undeveloped. The reason, Grigg observed, was that the Dominions appeared to be concerned "rather lest they should be committed to too much unity than to too little of it".<sup>4</sup>

The *Round Table* recognised that the Dominions' war efforts had contributed to "a greatly and justly enhanced sense of national dignity".<sup>5</sup>

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1 [Kerr,] "The Next Imperial Conference", *RT*, March 1926, pp 227-28.

2 [Kerr,] "The New Imperial Problem", *RT*, June 1923, pp 459-93; cf "Voyageur" [Kerr] in *The Times* 12,11,24.

3 [Kerr,] "The Imperial Conference", *RT*, Sept 1923, p 698.

4 [Grigg,] "The Imperial Conference", *RT*, Sept 1921, p 738.

5 [Grigg,] "The British Commonwealth of Nations in 1921", *RT*, Dec 1920, p 4.

privately, Coupland described the Dominions in 1919 as "almost morbidly sensitive at present on the question of 'equal nationhood'", and he acknowledged this to be the main factor militating against the Round Tablers' hopes for closer Imperial integration.<sup>1</sup> Dove took a similar view. Initially, he believed that the Dominions would "settle down after the 'first wild careless rapture' which followed upon victory".<sup>2</sup> By 1926, however, he was writing of a deep-seated "inferiority complex" towards Britain, which was frustrating any attempt to institutionalise Commonwealth unity.<sup>3</sup>

There were grounds for the existence of such a "complex". As one South African commented after J H Thomas's tour of the Dominion, "if the Englishman abroad will suppress the manifestations of his assurance as a superior person, he will do more permanent good to the British Empire than all the Primrose Leagues and Empire Leagues that ever wagged a flag".<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the Round Tablers (who were themselves always scrupulously courteous in their dealings with Dominion nationals) believed the root of the problem to lie in Dominion rather than British attitudes. Curtis wrote in 1934 of a "pathological condition" of "pique" in Dominion attitudes, which rendered it difficult for British people even to give advice to their counterparts in the Dominions.<sup>5</sup>

The London Round Tablers continued to believe that Dominion nationalism need not necessarily be antagonistic to Imperialism and to the

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<sup>1</sup> Coupland to Malcolm, 10 Feb 1919, RT Papers c 814, fols 148-49.

<sup>2</sup> Dove to Coupland, 2 March 1923, Brand Papers, box 70.

<sup>3</sup> Dove to Kerr, 16 Dec 1926, Lothian Papers 224, fols 349-56.

<sup>4</sup> F Clarke to Dove, 18 Sept 1924, Lothian Papers 19, fols 251-54.

<sup>5</sup> Curtis to Hodson, 20 Aug 1934, Lothian Papers 286, fol 605.



British connection, but they were forced to recognise that it frequently was. The problem was exacerbated by the extent to which nationalism was wrapped up in the internal politics of the Dominions: "twisting the lion's tail" provided an easy form of electioneering, and a mark of respectability for Dominion politicians anxious to convince their electorates that they would put the interests of their own constituents first. Such politicians, Kerr observed, made a living from "the fallacy that there is a choice between freedom and obligation".<sup>1</sup>

The problems of co-ordinating and strengthening Anglo-Dominion relations were thus increased by changes in the politics of the Dominions themselves, and especially by the rise of a new generation of nationalist politicians. Glazebrook in 1919 thought that "it would be a very serious disaster" if Mackenzie King "should really ever become Premier of Canada"<sup>2</sup>; yet King was the dominant figure in Canadian interwar politics, clocking up a total of 22 years in office between 1921 and 1948. More worrying still was the rise of Hertzog in South Africa: the *Round Table* held him "morally responsible" for the Afrikaner rebellion of 1914, and the Moot predicted in 1920 that if he should win an election South Africa would dissolve into civil war.<sup>3</sup> Yet Hertzog was indeed elected, and held the position of Prime Minister from 1924 to 1939. Finally, the Dominion solution to Britain's Irish problem introduced a further element of instability. Harrison Moore was initially optimistic that the Free State would "participate more fully in the conduct of affairs of the Commonwealth than other Dominions", and

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The New Imperial Problem", *RT*, June 1923, p 479.

<sup>2</sup> A J Glazebrook to Kerr, 4 Sept 1919, Lothian Papers 493.

<sup>3</sup> "South Africa", *RT*, March 1915, p 467; "Draft Circular to the Dominion Groups", 22 Dec 1920, Lothian Papers 17, fols 20-21.

'lead the way" towards closer Imperial integration.' Experience proved the opposite to be the case. First Cosgrave and then de Valera led the other Dominions in unravelling their ties with Britain, so that by 1937 Eire had 'a republican government in everything but name'.<sup>2</sup>

Even in the case of Ireland, the Round Tablers remained optimistic concerning the real (as opposed to the stated) objectives of Dominion nationalists. They believed that as soon as the Dominions saw the hollowness of their "real power" as "small nations", the chimera of independence would lose its appeal.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, there remained a deep ambivalence, and some division within the Moot, over the question of whether and in what way Britain should accommodate the nationalists' demands.

As early as 1913, Fred Perry and E J Kylie suggested pressure for formalising the autonomy of the Dominions by a declaration "that the Crown, and not the British Parliament as at present, is the bond which holds different parts of the Empire together". This suggestion, anticipating the Balfour Declaration of 1926, was not followed up, apparently because of the problematic position in which it would leave the Crown should governments offer differing advice.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, some members of the Moot were not afraid of letting the nationalists pursue the logic of their arguments.

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<sup>1</sup> [Harrison Moore,] "Ireland: an Australian Impression", *RT*, Sept 1923, p 800.

<sup>2</sup> [Horgan,] "The Irish Republican Kingdom", *RT*, March 1937, p 357. See here David Harkness, *The Restless Dominion* (London, 1969).

<sup>3</sup> Coupland to Malcolm, 10 Feb 1919, *RT Papers* c 814, fols 148-49.

<sup>4</sup> Perry to Kylie, 26 Feb 1913, *RT Papers* c 778, fols 74-76; further correspondence *ibid*, fols 38-42, 72-73, 77-78, 80-85 and c 781, fols 129-30.

Curtis went as far as suggesting, early in 1926, that the Dominions should be encouraged to declare their independence from Britain.

"First let that position be accepted, and then let each Dominion set about to settle in conference with Great Britain and with the other Dominions what in future their legal and constitutional relations are to be, and let the conclusions arrived at be embodied in documentary form . . . Then, and not till then, shall we begin to know where we are. But, in my opinion, nothing which could issue from such a process could be more pernicious than the present situation, based as it is on no surer foundation than a shifting sand of pretence."<sup>1</sup>

Kerr insisted that Curtis make clear he was writing in a purely individual capacity, and not on behalf of the Round Table.<sup>2</sup> In his own article anticipating the 1926 Imperial Conference, however, Kerr called on the premiers to appease the Dominions' "psychological feeling" by abolishing the last vestiges of dependence, including Britain's veto on Dominion legislation and the right of appeal to the Privy Council.<sup>3</sup>

The 1926 Conference, and the Balfour Report to which it gave rise, are often described as a landmark in Imperial relations. This was not the Round Table's view at the time. The Moot believed that the Balfour Report "defined a change that had already taken place".<sup>4</sup> Commenting in the *Round Table*, Sir Frederick Whyte quoted *The Times* to the effect that that the Conference merely "provided an agreed and authoritative picture of the Empire as it is". He added that there was a "comparative scarcity of practical conclusions", mitigated only by the "psychological value of the

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Hume Wrong, 15 April 1926, Lothian Papers 224, fols 321-24.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Dove, 29 April 1926, Lothian Papers 224, fols 327-28.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "The Next Imperial Conference", *RT*, March 1926, pp 227-55..

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, 5 Jan 1927, RT (O) Papers.

proceedings".<sup>1</sup>

Dove welcomed the fact that the Report "leaves the Empire a unit for the purpose of the play of Imperial sentiment in time of crisis" - "to my mind, the reality behind the British Empire . . . is the sentiment below the surface". Nevertheless, the Report left many questions unanswered. In particular, the "difference in function" which accompanied "equality in status" was an unsatisfactory gloss on the question of responsibility.<sup>2</sup> Eggleston went further: in his view, the Balfour Report was a "dismal joke".<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Harrison Moore, himself a member of the Conference on Dominion Legislation, was appalled by the difficulties of reconciling the irreconcilable, such as the absolute equality of legislatures with the legal unity of the Crown. The Report, he concluded, was "pure politics": deductive, doctrinaire and "hardly British".<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, he hoped that with such business out of the way, the Imperial Conference would no longer be dominated by "the mere desire of each to take back something in the way of advantage for which they can claim credit".<sup>5</sup>

The Moot also hoped that, with Dominion Status settled, "Dominion opinion may now begin to press in the opposite direction - for strengthening rather than loosening the Imperial structure".<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the Imperial Conference of 1930 was again dominated by

<sup>1</sup> [Whyte,] "The Imperial Conference", *RT*, March 1927, pp 225-41.

<sup>2</sup> Dove to Kerr, 16 Dec 1926, Lothian Papers 224, fols 349-56.

<sup>3</sup> Eggleston to Laby, 1 April 1932, Lothian Papers 267, fols 677-84.

<sup>4</sup> Moore, "Notes on the work of the Conference on Dominion Legislation", March 1930, Lothian Papers 23, fols 629-34.

<sup>5</sup> Moore to Dove, 19 Feb 1931, Lothian Papers 25, fols 864-66.

<sup>6</sup> [Kerr,] "Where are We Going?", *RT*, March 1930, p 227.



questions of "freedom" rather than of "unity".

Smuts's claim, on the eve of the Conference, that no member of the "free association" could withdraw without the consent of the others created an "outrage" amongst Hertzog's Nationalist supporters. Duncan urged that the right should be conceded. If the majority in South Africa wished to secede, "they could not be prevented from doing so". More importantly,

"I do not believe that more than a handful of the Nationalist party really want to secede. But if we trail the thing in front of them and dare them to say 'secession', of course they will all say it".<sup>1</sup>

Again, the majority of the Moot found the idea hard to stomach, and therefore rejected Duncan's views. Dove thought that talk of the Dominions' "right" to secession was like talking of Parliament's "right" to cut off Charles I's head.<sup>2</sup> The *Round Table* reflected his views. There was, Harrison Moore asserted, a "distinction between those things which may be changed as the result of discussion and those which cannot". The Dominions' allegiance to the Crown "cannot be dissolved by the unilateral act of the subject".<sup>3</sup>

There were thus limits to the Round Tablers' tolerance of the constitutional disintegration of the Empire. Nevertheless, the Moot remained optimistic, believing that the changes of 1917-31 had cleared the deadwood from Anglo-Dominion relations. Dove even asserted that the Moot

"recognised, after the war, that all this had to come . . . . We have done our best . . . to suggest improvements in machinery and otherwise, so as to render co-operation possible, but we have in no way run counter to the dominant movement which ended in the Statute of Westminster. Nor have we any regrets,

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<sup>1</sup> Duncan to Lothian, 3 June 1930, RT Papers c 813, fols 61-62.

<sup>2</sup> Dove to Lothian, 8 Sept 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fols 643-44.

<sup>3</sup> [Moore,] "The Crown and the Dominions", RT, Dec 1930, pp 96-105.



for we believe that nothing permanent, in the new conditions which arose after the war, could ever have been built on the old foundations".

The Empire was now "at a psychological moment". The "co-equality movement" had run its course. It was time to return to the "constructive ideal - the integration of the British Commonwealth".<sup>1</sup>

A series of Round Table meetings over the summer and autumn of 1932 discussed various options as to the best way forward. Grigg favoured the creation of an "Empire secretariat" and of an "Empire Foreign Affairs Committee", the latter consisting of delegations from the various national parliaments, based in Geneva.<sup>2</sup> Curtis, of course, argued that federation offered the only solution to the problem, but he also suggested the creation of a deliberative assembly, modelled on the Assembly of the League, in order to foster an all-Commonwealth outlook (and reveal the limits of co-operation "inexorably").<sup>3</sup> This latter suggestion commended itself to the Moot, and Curtis was therefore deputed to outline his proposal in a memorandum circulated to all the Round Table groups.<sup>4</sup>

Further suggestions were put forward in the *Round Table*: a Commonwealth tribunal, co-ordination of Commonwealth representation at Geneva, enhancement of the position of Dominion High Commissioners, interchange of civil service and military personnel, and some system of

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<sup>1</sup> Dove to T H Laby, 5 July 1932, (Melbourne file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg, "The British Empire, the League of Nations and the Rhodes Ideal", [circulated 28 Sept 1932], Lothian Papers 268, fols 753-89.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis, "Memorandum for Discussion at Blickling", 19 Sept 1932, Lothian Papers 268, fols 742-51.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, 7 to 10 Oct 1932, RT (O) Papers; Curtis, Draft Memorandum [circulated for 31 Oct 1932 meeting], Lothian Papers 268, fols 811-27.

joint (or shared) diplomatic representation.<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Bailey suggested various measures for enhancing the unifying rôle of the monarch, including more extensive Royal visits to the Dominions (when the monarch could assume the duties normally carried out by a Governor-General), and the appointment of a Governor-General or equivalent for purely British matters.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the 1930s, discussion of the machinery for Commonwealth co-operation was overshadowed by the prolonged economic, and worsening political, world crisis. Specific functional and regional co-operation looked increasingly more realistic than an "undiscriminating pursuit of uniformity".<sup>3</sup> The *Round Table* now began to suggest that a start might be made with just some Dominions (especially Australia and New Zealand) rather than wait for the slow movers.<sup>4</sup> Above all, however, the development of common machinery was subordinated to the more pressing need for common policy. As Hodson put it, "because the independence of the Dominions has been fully established, it is all the more necessary that on vital matters of common concern" the Empire "should secure the greatest possible measure of common policy".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See in particular [Sir Alexander Wood Renton,] "A Commonwealth Tribunal", *RT*, Sept 1933, pp 742-56; [Hodson,] "British Commonwealth Relations", *RT*, Dec 1933, pp 42-61.

<sup>2</sup> [Bailey,] "The King and his Peoples", *RT*, June 1937, pp 467-84.

<sup>3</sup> [Hodson,] "The Imperial Conference", *RT*, Sept 1937, p 701.

<sup>4</sup> [Hodson,] "British Commonwealth Relations", *RT*, March 1938, pp 275 ff.

<sup>5</sup> [Hodson,] "The Imperial Conference", *RT*, Sept 1937, p 696.

#### 4. PROBLEMS OF FOREIGN POLICY, 1910-39

Problems of Empire, and especially of Anglo-Dominion relations, were intimately linked with problems of foreign policy. On the one hand, Imperial relations were increasingly becoming a variant of international relations, and were closely affected by changes in Britain's international position. On the other, Britain's international position was itself affected by changes in the Empire, and particularly by the extent to which the Empire could be made to provide the resources to translate the idea of "world power" into reality. As Dove wrote in 1928, "foreign affairs have become an increasingly important, one might say all-important, part of the Imperial question".<sup>1</sup>

#### Imperial Foreign Policy

The war and its aftermath wrought changes in Britain no less than in the international situation and in the Dominions. The enormous cost of the war altered for all time Britain's economic and financial position. From being the world's greatest creditor nation she had become one of the largest debtors. Overseas investments had been liquidated at an alarming rate. Overseas markets had been lost. Industrial investment and productivity were sluggish. The imperative need to "balance books", yet also to respond to domestic pressures for an increased share of government expenditure, enforced stringent economies in defence. Even so, the disparity in defence expenditure between Britain and the Dominions remained stubborn, as the *Round Table* pointed out.

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<sup>1</sup> Dove to Hichens, 5 Dec 1928, Lothian Papers 243, fols 590-94.

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Estimated per capita defence expenditure, 1922-23<sup>1</sup>

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	Total*	Naval
Great Britain	11 - 18 - 7	1 - 6 - 8
Canada	3 - 11 - 11	0 - 1 - 4
Australia	5 - 18 - 0	0 - 8 - 2
New Zealand	5 - 13 - 0	0 - 4 - 7
South Africa	2 - 3 - 6	0

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\* includes war pensions and service of war debt

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Before the war, those who constituted the London Moot believed that the British Empire could not survive unless the Dominions contributed to its support. In the aftermath of war, the belief was stronger than ever. As the Moot argued in December 1920, naval predominance was "no longer within the unaided resources of the British Isles".<sup>2</sup>

Britain's essential weakness impressed itself in connection with India and the dependencies, as Curtis made clear:

"The discharge of a task so gigantic accumulates on Great Britain resentment, discredit and hatred throughout the world. Mistakes are inevitable and are always multiplied where strength is inadequate to the tasks imposed. A few Dyers might precipitate world-wide disaster".<sup>3</sup>

In 1928 Kerr proposed the creation of an "Imperial Council" or "Councils" for the dependencies, including representatives of the Dominions as well as "people who have lived long in the Colonies or Dependencies concerned".

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Imperial Conference", RT, Sept 1923, p 700.

<sup>2</sup> "Draft Circular to the Dominion Groups", 22 Dec 1920, Lothian Papers 17 (fols 16-29), fol 21.

<sup>3</sup> [Curtis,] "Preliminary Note on the Questions to be Raised . . . .", Jan 1921, Brand Papers, box 41.

Kerr saw his proposal as the first step towards transferring the dependencies from Britain's control to that of the Imperial Conference.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the task of co-opting the Dominions into supporting Britain's rôle in India and the dependencies was one which, for all Kerr's and Curtis's prompting, the Moot appears wisely to have abandoned.

The task of co-opting the Dominions into supporting Imperial defence and foreign policy was not abandoned. It was, in the Round Table view, essential that the Empire should remain a single "personality" in world affairs. Despite the more extreme manifestations of Dominion nationalism, Round Tablers believed that here, at least, they were on common ground. "Unity in international affairs of the British Empire . . . is no less a part of the new orthodoxy than the recognition of the equality inter se of the members of it." The problem, as Malcolm put it, was "how to make the partnership work".<sup>2</sup>

The League of Nations transformed the context both of British foreign policy and of the Anglo-Dominion relationship. The Moot subscribed to Milner's view (originally "a simple formula for the Yank") that the Empire/Commonwealth was both a "prototype" and a "pillar" of the League. Commonwealth unity was therefore essential for the League's success.<sup>3</sup> But the Dominions' separate representation added a new dimension to the problem of co-ordinating British and Dominion foreign policies. Writing in the

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1 Kerr, "Memorandum for circulation to the Moot" [sent 11 Dec 1928], Lothian Papers 243, fols 580-88.

2 [Malcolm,] "The Meeting of the Imperial Cabinet", *RT*, June 1921 (pp 535-57), pp 552 and 542.

3 Milner's note attached to Grigg to Milner, 1 Aug 1919, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999. For an interesting critique of this argument, see J D B Miller, "The Commonwealth and World Order: the Zimmern Vision and After", *JICH*, Vol VIII (Oct 1979), pp 159-74. What Miller refers to as the "Zimmern vision" was common currency within the Moot.



Round Table, Kerr described Dominion representation as "a matter of form without political substance".<sup>1</sup> Von Haast of the New Zealand Round Table thought that it was "one of those political steps which was meant to please the Dominions without meaning anything and which on the other hand is going to endanger the whole fabric of the Empire".<sup>2</sup>

Von Haast's views were unusual. Generally, opinion in the Dominions regarded their representation at the League as a symbol of their "equality" with Great Britain, and proof of their "separate and independent" foreign policy rôle.<sup>3</sup> League representation was an important factor in the development both of Dominion opinion on international affairs and of the machinery to put that opinion into practice. As Kerr came to realise, so long as Dominion policies ran on lines parallel to British policies there was little danger of disruption.

"Representatives of the nations of the English speaking world find they think differently from the other peoples. They have similar processes of comprehending a problem, and they are irresistibly impelled into sympathetic co-operative action in working it out".<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, as Hodson later argued, the League might provide a "co-ordinating factor" in Anglo-Dominion relations, and the collective system might furnish "an acceptable warp for the fabric of Commonwealth foreign

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The British Empire, the League of Nations, and the United States", RT, March 1920, p 239.

<sup>2</sup> H F von Haast to Curtis, 8 March 1920, Brand Papers, box 42.

<sup>3</sup> See, eg, New South Wales resolution for the Melbourne conference of Australian Round Tablers, 20 Sept 1919, RT Papers c 802, fols 224-25.

<sup>4</sup> Interview in *Toronto Daily Star*, 7 Nov 1922, Lothian Papers 19, fols 223-31.

policy".<sup>1</sup> Problems would arise, however, if British and Dominion policies began to diverge, or if the collective system itself came under strain.

In contrast to the prewar period, the London Round Tablers recognised that, despite the lack of adequate machinery for doing so, Imperial foreign policy would have to be framed with an eye on the Dominions. Grigg described this as "the imperative necessity, in spite of all difficulties, of keeping our policy in line with the opinion of the Dominions".<sup>2</sup> Dove put the question only slightly differently, when he wrote that "the real crux will always be, does the policy adopted commit us to a path which, from the nature of things, the Dominions themselves cannot in the long run be expected to follow".<sup>3</sup> There were, of course, areas in which the Round tablers believed that Dominion opinion was wrong, and should therefore be overridden or cajoled; nevertheless, the integrity of Imperial foreign policy remained an immensely important litmus-test which the Round Tablers applied throughout the 1920s and '30s.

A series of foreign policy decisions in the early 1920s made clear that successive British Governments failed this test. First there was the Chanak incident, when Lloyd George and Churchill attempted to rush the Dominions into supporting a fait accompli. A different British Government again expected the Dominions merely to endorse British decisions in connection with the Treaty of Lausanne. The *Round Table* pointed the moral that "if the Empire is to avoid the shocks which are inevitable under the present want of system, there must be continuous consultation between

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<sup>1</sup> [Hodson,] "British Commonwealth Relations", *RT*, Dec 1933 (pp 42-61), pp 53 and 56.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Curtis, 11 April 1924, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1001.

<sup>3</sup> Dove to Kerr, 16 Dec 1926, Lothian Papers 224, fols 349-56.

representatives of all parts before, and not merely after, a crisis has arisen".<sup>1</sup> In 1925, the Treaty of Locarno posed the most important threat so far to the unity of Imperial foreign policy, committing Britain to the balance of power in Europe, but leaving it open to the Dominions whether or not to follow. The *Round Table* initially supported Locarno, provoking a heated correspondence between Kerr and Loring Christie.

Christie argued that Locarno was "at variance with the *Round Table* line of the past 7 or 8 years". It illustrated the extent to which the League had become "Europeanised", and to which British foreign policy had followed suit. The Empire "could agree upon and pursue a common foreign policy only if all its members could refrain from implicating themselves in the security arrangements of special regions of the earth". The "Imperial co-operation project" had now broken down. The Empire could only be conceived "not as a unit but as a number of different members": there 'cannot be a common policy'.<sup>2</sup>

Christie was in effect arguing the Imperialist case against the British government. Kerr could only reply that Christie went too far in dividing the world into "water-tight compartments". European problems were in fact "world problems", and although he hoped that Britain "will increasingly draw out of" the League, the "only practical course is to carry on along the somewhat anomalous lines which prevail at present".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "Imperial Diplomacy", *RT*, Sept 1924, p 664.

<sup>2</sup> [Christie,] "Notes based on discussion by Dominions and Foreign Policy group, BIIA", 8 Feb 1926, Lothian Papers 20, fols 333-50.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr-Christie correspondence, Lothian Papers 20, fols 364-86 and 221, fols 72-99.

Kerr subsequently accepted some of Christie's points.<sup>1</sup> In many ways, Locarno was a turning-point for him: thereafter, he opposed all attempts to involve Britain in the "internal politics" of Europe.

If the major portion of blame for the breakdown of Imperial co-operation in foreign policy attached to British governments, the Round Table also held Dominion governments culpable. "The real reason for the absence of an effective control over foreign policy by the Dominions is that they are not for the moment interested".<sup>2</sup> The Dominions were "living in blinkers", lulled into a false sense of security by Britain's apparent ability to continue bearing the "lion's share" of defence expenditure.<sup>3</sup>

The Balfour Report and the Statute of Westminster did nothing to alter this situation. Writing in the *Round Table*, Harrison Moore emphasised that "the principle of a common allegiance and the principle of differentiation of function are in every way as important as the principle of equality of status".<sup>4</sup> But public opinion in Britain and the Dominions seemed largely impervious to such reasoning.

The changes of 1926-31, as Hodson commented, "evolved against the background of a world in which the collective system played the leading rôle in international affairs, and seemed likely to grow in strength".<sup>5</sup> Within a few years the threats to the collective system became apparent: the need for greater Commonwealth integration became increasingly urgent. As Hodson, again, emphasised, "the British collective system of security is

<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Imperial Complex", *RT*, Sept 1926, pp 673-89.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The New Imperial Problem", *RT*, June 1923, p 492.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "The Next Imperial Conference", *RT*, March 1926, pp 231-33.

<sup>4</sup> [Moore,] "The Crown and the Dominions", *RT*, Dec 1930, p 105.

<sup>5</sup> [Hodson,] "British Commonwealth Relations", *RT*, Dec 1933, p 61.

still a reality, whatever may be the future of the world system".<sup>1</sup>

In 1934 the *Round Table* identified two essential features of a Commonwealth foreign policy: first, the defence of the collective system, and secondly the maintenance of an alignment with the United States.<sup>2</sup> Increasingly, however, the *Round Table* (and Lothian in particular) saw a contradiction between these two features. "Appeasement" was thus born out of a retreat from Europe and into the "Oceanic" world of America and the Dominions. The *Round Table's* increasing desperation for a common Imperial foreign policy led it to grasp, if necessary, at "a foreign policy for the British Commonwealth, less one Dominion".<sup>3</sup>

Parallel with the *Round Table's* attempts to build a real Commonwealth foreign policy went an increasing emphasis on defence arrangements. As early as 1933, the *Round Table* was again floating the possibility of Dominion contributions to the Royal Navy.<sup>4</sup> It was the possibility of a joint system of air power which the magazine found most attractive, however. The Dominions lagged far behind Britain in naval expenditure. They might therefore provide more than their fair share of air power, so that "the Commonwealth of British nations will accord in fact with its constitutional formulae".<sup>5</sup>

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1 [Hodson,] "The Coordination of Defence", *RT*, June 1936, p 462.

2 [Lothian,] "The Empire, the League and Security", *RT*, March 1934, p 239.

3 [Hodson,] "The Imperial Conference", *RT*, Sept 1937, p 697.

4 [Hodson,] "British Commonwealth Relations", *RT*, Dec 1933, p 61.

5 [Gen Fuller,] "Air Power and Imperial Defence", *RT*, June 1934, pp 490-507.



America, the Commonwealth and the League

The extent of the shift in Round Table attitudes towards America which took place during the war can hardly be exaggerated. Members of the Root recognised America's entry into the war to have been decisive, first in averting the financial collapse which threatened Britain's war effort in 1917, and secondly in providing the manpower which ensured that it was the Central Powers and not the Allies which succumbed in 1918.<sup>1</sup> After the war, the American axis remained central to the Round Tablers' strategic and political thinking: "It is not too much to say that if the British Commonwealth is to survive, and if the world is to be guided towards peace and unity, it is essential that the United States and the British Commonwealth should act in friendly co-operation".<sup>2</sup>

Kerr/Lothian was, of course, uniquely enthusiastic in calling for Anglo-American co-operation. He visited America frequently, on Rhodes Trust business which he often combined with more directly political interests. He claimed "to have something more than the impressions of the ordinary British globe-trotter".<sup>3</sup> To a certain extent his claim was accepted in Britain. Lord Halifax later wrote of "the rare intuition which he displayed . . . in divining how Americans would act and feel if this or that line were taken by Great Britain".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the first point, see Brand, *War and National Finance* (London, 1921), Introduction; for the second, see [Coupland,] "The Unity of Civilisation", *RT*, Sept 1918, pp 661-62.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "A Programme for the British Commonwealth", *RT*, March 1922 p 247.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Austen Chamberlain, 24 Jan 1928, Lothian Papers 227, fol 109.

<sup>4</sup> Halifax, "Preface" to Curtis (ed), *The American Speeches of Lord Lothian* (London, 1941), p viii.

America was Kerr/Lothian's "fad", as East Africa was Grigg's, or China Curtis's. Occasionally, he was driven to complain of his Round Table colleagues' refractoriness.<sup>1</sup> Far more often, he got his own way. Other Round Tablers were at times equally enthusiastic advocates of Anglo-American partnership. It was Curtis who provided the *Round Table's* most forceful argument for American colonial responsibility. And it was Brand who defined "strengthening the ties between the English speaking races" as one of the main objects of Round Table policy.<sup>2</sup>

The Round Tablers believed that friendly relations between Britain and America were a necessity if the Empire was to remain united. There was, of course, the peculiarly vulnerable position of Canada. More generally, the Dominions as a whole were believed to stand in an equivocal position between Britain and America.<sup>3</sup> Cultural Americanisation was recognised even in that most "British" of Dominions, New Zealand.<sup>4</sup> Political Americanisation was an acknowledged possibility. Grigg condemned Britain's obligations under the Straits Convention on the grounds that the Dominions would not follow, and that "if we ignore that feature in the sentiment of the overseas democracies, we shall find them over a course of years ranging themselves instinctively and inevitably, not behind us, but behind the United States".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, eg, Lothian to Curtis, 27 Aug 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fols 633-34.

<sup>2</sup> [Curtis,] "Windows of Freedom", *RT*, Dec 1918, pp 1-47; [Brand,] "Memorandum" [late 1919], Brand Papers, box 42.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "Anglo-American Relations", *RT*, Dec 1926, pp 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> E ff V Lascelles to Moot, [circulated Dec 1928,] Lothian Papers 21, fols 457-74.

<sup>5</sup> Grigg, Memorandum on the Straits Convention, [sent to Ramsay MacDonald 29 Feb 1924,] Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1001.

Another factor which impelled Britain towards friendly relations with the United States was the latter's naval power. Kerr claimed that the Washington Treaty of 1921 committed the two countries to "a steady attempt at co-operation" because it shared "the historic function of seapower between the two navies".<sup>1</sup> The rôle of the British Admiralty in reviving the naval arms race later in the decade was roundly condemned: "the United States can financially afford to build five ships to our one".<sup>2</sup> The revival of Anglo-American antagonism threw Kerr into another of his fits of blue funk: he even talked of Britain and America "drift[ing] into competition with its inevitable end, another world war".<sup>3</sup>

As well as the negative aim of avoiding conflict between the two countries, the Moot had a more positive conception of the rôle which Anglo-American co-operation might play in world affairs.

The proposal that America should take up the baton of colonial administration in the Middle East formed an important part of the Round Table's discussion of the terms of peace. In making it, Curtis also suggested that American rule should extend to Mexico and Liberia, and that America should take a forward rôle in "regenerating" the "unhappy people" of Russia.<sup>4</sup> In fact, America was offered only Armenia, "where she could

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The British Commonwealth, the Protocol and the League", *RT*, Dec 1924, p 5.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The Naval Conference", *RT*, Sept 1927, p 680; cf Dove to Kerr, 18 July 1927, Lothian Papers 231, fols 507-20: the Americans "have the whip-hand of us".

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Frank B Kellogg, 30 March 1928, Lothian Papers 228, fols 292-93.

<sup>4</sup> [Curtis,] "Windows of Freedom", *RT*, Dec 1918, pp 20-34.

not profit and where she must of necessity spend large sums of money".<sup>1</sup> If Anglo-French greed was the immediate problem, a more fundamental problem was the attitude of Americans themselves. Kerr noted the prevalence of the belief that imperialism was immoral and undemocratic. This he characterised as a form of naïveté. Kerr himself was initially inclined to optimism: "the issues are comparatively simple, and the education of [American] public opinion could be rapid".<sup>2</sup>

"Education" was also the Round Table's characteristic solution to the problem of American reluctance to become involved in the framework of international security. America's rapid retreat into isolationism following Versailles was the cause of considerable disillusionment amongst the Round Tablers and their allies. Loring Christie reported the atmosphere in America in 1920 to be "horrible" - "100% American and to hell with the rest of the world".<sup>3</sup> Even Kerr was driven to compare the American people to "children playing in a pleasant garden".<sup>4</sup>

The "education" of American opinion was a goal shared by the Council on Foreign Relations, which the Moot's intervention helped to catalyse into a more active existence in 1922.<sup>5</sup> Prominent amongst the reformed Council's members were the Moot's contacts from J F Morgan and Co (the bank which

<sup>1</sup> [Ray Stannard Baker,] "The United States and the Old World", *RT*, June 1921, p 567.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 15 Oct 1918, *RT Papers* c 810, fols 229-37. See also Zimmer to J V Defoe, 28 May 1922, *Brand Papers*, box 70, hoping that America would eventually undertake "the main responsibility for the political education of Russia and China".

<sup>3</sup> Christie to Kerr, 12 Jan 1920, *Lothian Papers* 207, fols 182-87.

<sup>4</sup> Interview in *Toronto Daily Star*, 7 Nov 1922, *Lothian Papers* 19, fols 223-31.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p 220.

handled British purchases in America before 1915) and from Wilson's delegation at Versailles: Shotwell, Coolidge, Lamont, John W Davis, Norman E Davis, Charles P Howland, Paul D Cravath and Isaiah Bowman. Whitney Shepardson, the *Round Table's* American correspondent, was the first secretary of the reformed Council. The Council's aim was defined as that of "developing a reasoned American foreign policy". Individual members were prominent in urging a more "constructive" and expansionist policy and a more sympathetic approach to Britain.<sup>1</sup>

The Round Tablers' traffic with America was by no means all one-way, although their emphasis on the "education" of American opinion was apt to obscure the fact. Indeed, American attitudes and anticipated American reactions exercised a powerful influence on the Round Tablers' approach to a wide range of foreign policy issues.

Once it was clear that America would not join Britain in the League, the Round Table insisted on the necessity of revising Britain's commitments under Articles 10 and 16. "Americans are too fond of talking high ideals and leaving us to do all the work in attaining them", Grigg remarked to Nancy Astor.<sup>2</sup> Britain simply did not have the resources to carry out her obligations without American backing. It was more dangerous to make commitments which could not be implemented than not to make them in the first place: "those who need our support may interpret [them] more literally than we do ourselves".<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the enforcement of sanctions by the League entailed the possibility of conflict between Britain and

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<sup>1</sup> Laurence Shoup and William Mintner, *Imperial Brain Trust* (New York, 1977), p 16 and *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Nancy Astor, 21 Sept 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "The British Empire, the League of Nations, and the United States", *RT*, March 1920, pp 244 and ff.



America, particularly over the still unresolved question of belligerent versus neutral rights. (Kerr favoured re-defining the controversy by distinguishing between "public" and "private" wars, but this was problematical while America stood out of the only international body which could make such a distinction.<sup>1</sup>) Another reason for disembarassing the League of automatic commitments was that such a course was believed to make it more likely that America would join.<sup>2</sup> Without American participation, Curtis believed the League to be largely "a sham", and an additional burden on Britain rather than an additional security.<sup>3</sup>

America's attitude was by no means immediately clear, of course: as Shepardson wrote, Harding won the 1920 election by "bringing together in his support men who believed in the League, men who believed in a League, and men who believed in no League at all".<sup>4</sup> The Moot's contacts in the CFR were initially optimistic concerning American attitudes. The turning point appears to have been 1924, when John W Davis stood unsuccessfully as Democrat presidential candidate, on a programme which included a more "constructive" foreign policy. The following year, Shepardson made it clear that American isolationism was likely to stay, and that "the road towards political stability" was one which "Europe must travel alone".<sup>5</sup>

Most members of the Moot appear to have accepted that American participation in collective security should now be discounted. Kerr

<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The British Commonwealth, Freedom and the Seas", *RT*, March 1929, pp 243-48.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The British Commonwealth, the Protocol, and the League", *RT*, Dec 1924, p 20.

<sup>3</sup> [Curtis,] "The World in Conference", *RT*, Sept 1920, p 750.

<sup>4</sup> [Shepardson,] "The Passing of Woodrow Wilson", *RT*, Dec 1920, p 27.

<sup>5</sup> [Shepardson,] "President and Senate", *RT*, June 1925, pp 457-71.

remained optimistic. While noting that Americans had "none of that sense of international reality and international responsibility which in Great Britain is axiomatic", he asserted that it was "only a question of time for the United States to play her full part in the international world".<sup>1</sup>

The enormous hopes which Kerr attached to American participation in the framework of international security go a long way to explain the extraordinary attitude which he adopted towards the "outlawry of war" proposal which emerged from the Kellogg-Briand correspondence of 1927-28. Kerr welcomed the proposal in hyperbolic terms: "immensely important", the beginning of "a new era", "bring[ing] into being for the whole world a system fundamentally similar to . . . the British Commonwealth of Nations".<sup>2</sup> The reason was transparent: the proposal "puts the United States morally behind the treaty settlement, inasmuch as she would hardly be indifferent - having signed it - to an attempt by any Power to upset it by force of arms".<sup>3</sup> The fundamental misjudgment inherent in such reasoning was exposed by Shotwell:

" . . . the present proposal is not the outlawry proposal. The formula 'renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy' is the only one really suitable for American policy as things stand at present. The outlawry people do not seem to realize that, technically speaking, outlawry would call for the kind of sanction which they definitely find fault with".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "Anglo-American Relations", *RT*, Dec 1926, pp 7 and 16.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The Outlawry of War", *RT*, June 1928, pp 473-75. Dove thought Kerr's article "one of the best you have written": Dove to Kerr, 21.5.28, Lothian Papers 231, fol 551.

<sup>3</sup> [Kerr,] "The Outlawry of War", p 466; cf [Kerr,] "The Peace Pact", *RT*, Sept 1928, pp 727-45.

<sup>4</sup> James T Shotwell to Shepardson (copy), 23 June 1928, Lothian Papers 233, fol 701.

Outlawry reinforced rather than replaced America's confidence in its isolation. Kerr did not draw the obvious conclusion, however, that Britain should now look elsewhere for support. On the contrary, "if . . . Great Britain is forced to choose between association with a Europe drifting back to the balance of military power on the one hand, and with the United States on the other, she will inevitably choose the latter". The choice "will be forced upon her by the Dominions".<sup>1</sup>

#### Europe in the 1920s: Commitment and Conciliation

The Round Table's reaction against the Treaty of Versailles began even before the ink was dry. Kerr had been the only member of the Moot who had approved of the mandate which Lloyd George took to Paris. Yet even he was disturbed by the course of the Allied negotiations, pointing out to Lloyd George "several times . . . that, while every exaction on Germany was justified on its merits, the accumulation of these will place Germany in an utterly impossible position".<sup>2</sup> Like Lloyd George, Kerr comforted himself with the thought that no treaty was permanent, and that the Covenant of the League provided explicitly for revision.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever the temporary situation, it was clear that Germany was "potentially still the most powerful state in Europe".<sup>4</sup> It was therefore unrealistic to expect that Germany would "submit to her present position of

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1 [Kerr,] "Towards Peace or War?", *RT*, June 1930, p 467.

2 Hankey, *The Supreme Control at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (London, 1963), p 97.

3 Harold Nicholson, *Diaries and Letters, 1930-39* (London, 1966), p 82. See also A Lentin, *Guilt at Versailles* (London edn, 1985), pp 135 ff.

4 [Kerr,] "The Locarno Treaties", *RT*, Dec 1925, p 3.

subordination for ever".<sup>1</sup>

The Round Tablers found particular fault with the reparations clauses. As Brand pointed out, not only were the sums claimed "fantastic", but they were also profoundly destabilising on all the economies involved.<sup>2</sup> In 1921 the *Round Table* suggested all-round cancellation of inter-Allied debts as the key to a more moderate settlement.<sup>3</sup> Other aspects of the terms imposed on Germany which the *Round Table* criticised included those relating to the Saar Valley and the Rhineland, and the limitation of Germany's army. Germany's losses of Upper Silesia, Eupen and Malmédy were criticised on the grounds of national self-determination, as was the prohibition against union with Austria. Germany's other losses were on the whole believed to be justified.<sup>4</sup>

The peace settlement's legacy of unsolved problems was believed to be even more ominous in Eastern Europe. There the patchwork of ethnicities was a standing contradiction to the ideal of national self-determination. "Nobody believes that the frontiers of Eastern Europe to-day are stable": indeed, violent conflict was "certainly much more than a hypothesis".<sup>5</sup>

The Round Tablers' attitude to Europe was "benightedly insular", as

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1 [Kerr,] "Europe, the Covenant and the Protocol, *RT*, March 1925, p 231.

2 [Brand,] "The Future of Reparations and Inter-Allied Debts", *RT*, March 1923, pp 273-86.

3 [Headlam-Morley and Horsfall,] "The Aftermath of Victory", *RT*, Dec 1921, pp 112-13.

4 [Headlam-Morley,] "Problems of Europe: the Paris Conference and After", *RT*, March 1920, pp 293-321; cf [Headlam-Morley et al,] "Problems of Europe", *RT*, Sept 1921, pp 848-67.

5 [Kerr,] "The Security Pact", *RT*, Sept 1925, p 648; [idem,] "The Locarno Treaties", *RT*, Dec 1925, p 10.

Grigg candidly admitted.<sup>1</sup> They recognised few British interests in Europe, other than the security of North-West Europe and a general commitment to the restoration of stable economic conditions.<sup>2</sup> Fundamentally, they believed that Britain was an Oceanic not a continental power. Her future lay with the Empire/Commonwealth and the United States rather than with Europe. The attempt to involve herself in European diplomacy would be "as ridiculous as a fish out of water".<sup>3</sup>

Detachment from Europe was exacerbated by the Round Tablers' reading of the long-term future. "Europe can only be stabilised in one of three ways - by the predominance of one group, by the balance of power, or by federation". Kerr declared in 1926. Of these three options, the first two were inherently unstable, and only the third offered a permanent solution.<sup>4</sup> The *Round Table* welcomed Briand's pan-Europeanist diplomacy of the late 1920s, agreeing that Europe "must think continentally".<sup>5</sup>

The long-term trend in Europe was thus believed to be towards economic and political integration, with Britain and the Commonwealth forming a separate bloc. It followed that Britain could best help Europe by following her "ancient diplomatic tradition of limited entanglement" in the continent's "internal problems": or "leaving Europe to stew in its

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1 Grigg to W Turner Perkins, 11 April 1924, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1001 (opposing plans for a Channel Tunnel).

2 [Kerr,] "Cologne, The Security Pact and the League", *RT*, June 1925, pp 431-56

3 [L Christie,] "A Basis for Imperial Foreign Policy", *RT*, March 1924, p 284.

4 [Kerr,] "The Crisis in World Affairs", *RT*, June 1926, pp 454-55.

5 [Harold Butler,] "Europe at the Cross-Roads", *RT*, June 1926, p 482; cf [Salter,] "The United States of Europe", *RT*, Dec 1929, pp 79-99.

6 [Kerr,] "The Crisis in World Affairs", *RT*, June 1926, p 463.



own juice", as Lord Davies later put it.<sup>1</sup> This also was the conclusion from an examination of the short-term prospects. "I wish the British Empire would keep as clear of Europe as possible", Grigg wrote to Bailey in 1924.

"There is not one chance in ten of preventing another great war within the next 20 or 30 years, and I think that we should try to keep as much aloof from all the preliminary trouble as possible. We are much more likely to be able to stop it ultimately if we stand aloof, like the US, than if we go messing about in European diplomacy and making ourselves a part of the European balance of power."<sup>2</sup>

The Round Tablers' reaction against Versailles was in large part a reaction against the policy of France. In March 1921, the *Round Table* reported "a real divergence between France and Britain on their views as to post-war Europe".<sup>3</sup> An atmosphere of alarmism prevailed. Dove worried where Britain's League commitments would lead her if there were another war, and the "real offence", if not the technical aggression, came from France.<sup>4</sup> Others in the Mout were equally disturbed. "We cannot allow Poincaré to ruin Europe. If we do then Germany and Russia must inevitably join up", Brand wrote, after meeting Dr Wirth.<sup>5</sup> Grigg, as Lloyd George's secretary, was the recipient of numerous rumours, of French preparations for war, of French offers of support for America in case of an Anglo-American war, of French conspiracy with the Vatican for the domination of

1 Lord Davies, "'Round Table' or 'World Commonwealth'?", *The Nineteenth Century and After*, vol CXVII (Jan 1935), p 47.

2 Grigg to Bailey, 8 May 1924, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1001.

3 [Headlam-Morley,] "The Paris Conference", *RT*, March 1921, p 274.

4 Dove to Grigg, 11 April 1922, Lothian Papers 18, fol 138.

5 Brand to Grigg, 20 April 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 999.

Eastern Europe and for control of Constantinople.<sup>1</sup>

France's occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 epitomised her policy in the immediate postwar period: disastrous for Germany and herself alike.

"France is to my mind directly responsible for the probable failure of the democratic experiment in Germany", Dove concluded, not for the first or last time. The *Round Table* found Britain's Conservative Government to be almost equally culpable. Its failure to stop France was "an abject surrender of the whole moral position of the British Commonwealth".<sup>2</sup>

Kerr/Lothian in particular has received criticism as a "Francophobe", a trait which is often ascribed to his apostasy. In fact, the religious element appears to have been quite superficial.<sup>3</sup> Nor was Francophobia apparent before 1919, although an Anglocentric disdain for "Latin" behaviour sometimes was. Francophobia, if such it was, was the direct outcome of the years 1919-23. Kerr's views were common currency in the *Koot*. Grigg's maiden speech as an MP was devoted to an attack on French policy, and he was a persistent critic of British policy towards France throughout the decade. Brand even criticised Kerr in 1925 for taking a line too conciliatory to French concerns.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This last from George Grahame, British Ambassador in Brussels, who wrote via Grigg because he believed the Foreign Office to be riddled with Roman Catholics: Grahame to Grigg, 7 Feb and 26 Sept 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1000.

<sup>2</sup> Dove to Brand, 9 Oct 1923, Brand Papers, box 70. [Horsfall,] "The Problem of Europe", *RT*, Dec 1923, pp 22 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr suffered religious doubts in 1912-13, and finally converted from Roman Catholicism to Christian Science in 1922. Nevertheless, he claimed that the differences between the two religions were much less than was commonly supposed: Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 11 March 1922, Lothian Papers 467, fol 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Hansard (Commons)*, 5th Series, Vol 162 (28 March 1923), cols 581-91. Brand to Curtis, 6 Feb 1925, Brand Papers, box 182.

The *Round Table* did not share the commonly accepted view that the "Locarno honeymoon" was a benevolent period of Franco-German rapprochement, facilitated by an impartial Austen Chamberlain. On the contrary, Chamberlain was accused of pursuing a policy "subordinate to the policy of France", and of "supporting . . . the French hegemony".<sup>1</sup> "Psychologically, of course, France lost the war and Germany won it", Kerr wrote to MacDonald in 1928.

"France to-day has no real belief in the possibility of European problems being settled peacefully, and is doing everything she can to get us into an entente which is really anti-German, though labelled 'Locarno'."<sup>2</sup>

The Round Tablers were now profoundly more sensitive to the German point of view than to the French, and cut their cloth accordingly. "We must 'assist' Stresemann", Dove wrote in 1927. There were "people in Germany always hovering near the popular ear on the look out for a chance of getting back what they regard as their own by force". The factors working against democracy in Germany were so strong that it was "amazing" it had survived so long. "Disarmament is, of course, the burning question."<sup>3</sup>

For the first time since the fall of Lloyd George, the Round Tablers found an identity of purpose with the British government following the elections of May 1929. "We think pretty much on the same lines", as MacDonald had written to Kerr in 1928.<sup>4</sup> Alas, the situation in 1932 was

<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "A Plea for an Independent Foreign Policy", *RT*, Dec 1928, p 1.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr to MacDonald, 16 Nov 1928, Lothian Papers 243, fols 561-62.

<sup>3</sup> Letters from Dove to Brand, [Sept 1927], Lothian Papers 21 (fols 416-40), fols 419, 429, 432, 426.

<sup>4</sup> MacDonald to Kerr, 19 Nov 1928, Lothian Papers 243, fol 563.

very different from that in 1928. The disarmament conference over which Henderson presided (despite resigning from the Foreign Office in the crisis of August 1931) found little common ground amongst the main protagonists. Even Britain contributed to its unsatisfactory *dénouement*, by "dissolving its substance in streams of tepid water".<sup>1</sup>

Against a background in which the threat of authoritarianism in Germany was now a real rather than a speculative danger, the Round Tablers redoubled their efforts to gain acceptance for a negotiated end to the "artificial" balance created by the peace settlement. Treaty revision was now inevitable "either by consent or by force"; nothing should be excluded "except the Western frontiers of Europe".<sup>2</sup>

#### Global concerns: Russia and Japan

Like many of their contemporaries the Round Tablers were alarmist about the spread of Bolshevism in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. India was "a pretty likely field for Bolsheviks"<sup>3</sup>, and it was also "pretty clear that the peoples of South America, Africa and China, will be quite incapable of resisting [Bolshevism] . . . unless the Western Powers help them to do so".<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the Round Tablers were dubious of the value of Allied intervention in Russia itself. Indeed, the Allies' support of the Whites "was probably the decisive factor in the triumph of

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<sup>1</sup> [H Butler,] "Towards the World Conference", *RT*, Sept 1932, p 697.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The Foundations for Disarmament", *RT*, Dec 1932, pp 1-20.

<sup>3</sup> Dove to Brand, 24 April 1919, Lothian Papers 492, item 1.

<sup>4</sup> Kerr to Curtis, 15 Oct 1918, *RT* Papers c 810, fols 229-37.

the Soviet regime", by associating the latter "with the cause of Russian nationalism".<sup>1</sup>

Despite their hostility to Bolshevik ideas the Round Tablers advocated a cautious policy of economic appeasement in the early 1920s.<sup>2</sup> Lloyd George's attempt to carry out such a policy at Genoa in 1922 was, however, recognised to have been a failure. The fundamental cause was believed to be the publicity surrounding the conference, forcing the reiteration of propaganda on both sides at a time when Russia was "in retreat from Communism" and should be allowed to do so "as easily and quietly as possible".<sup>3</sup>

The view that Russia was in retreat from Communism made sense at a time when War Communism was being dismantled in favour of the New Economic Policy, although even so the "extreme adaptability" and the "will to power" of the Soviet leadership remained a worry.<sup>4</sup> By the late 1920s, however, the flaws in such a view were apparent. While it was "almost impossible to get at the truth about Russia"<sup>5</sup>, it was nevertheless clear that the Soviet leadership was heading towards a confrontation with the market forces let loose by the NEP. The course of this confrontation was charted in a series of impressionistic articles by Maurice Hindus. The implications were

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<sup>1</sup> (A V A Leeper,] "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Russia", *RT*, March 1920, p 325.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 342 ff. This line was dictated by the Moot: see Kerr to Leeper, 19 Jan 1920, Lothian Papers 214, fol 144.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr to Grigg, 22 April 1922, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1000. This view was supported by Herbert Hoover: See the "Note of a Conversation between Mr Hoover and Mr Kerr" attached.

<sup>4</sup> (Sir William Peters,] "The Communist Experiment in Russia", *RT*, June 1922, pp 538-54.

<sup>5</sup> Kerr to Dove, 1 Sept 1927, Lothian Papers 231, fols 536-37.



spelled out by Lothian: the Bolshevik leopard had not changed its spots, and the first five-year plan was "clearly . . . designed from a military standpoint".<sup>1</sup> Soviet Russia thus remained a standing menace to European peace. Whether the menace became a real threat depended entirely on the European situation.

The situation in the Far East was equally worrying. The Round Tablers (unlike their Australian colleagues) had been firm supporters of the pre-1914 Alliance with Japan. Nevertheless, the latter's opportunistic policy during the First World War introduced doubts. Weighing up the pros and cons of renewing the Alliance (due to expire in 1921), Kerr emphasised Japanese "chauvinism" and her desire for "exclusive privileges" in China as factors militating against renewal.<sup>2</sup> Equally important was the attitude of the United States, from where it was reported that "Britain's gains from such an alliance could certainly not balance her losses".<sup>3</sup> Kerr therefore suggested an international conference at which the Alliance could be dropped, and Japan could be made to realise that "British, American, Dominion and Chinese interests really run together, and . . . that her only course was to keep on good terms with all of us".<sup>4</sup> This was, indeed, the outcome of the Washington Conference of 1921.

The Far East presented "the most probable storm centre of any trouble in the immediate future", the *Round Table* declared at the time of the

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Political Foundations for Disarmament", *RT*, Sept 1931, p 730.

<sup>2</sup> [Kerr,] "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance", *RT*, Dec 1920, pp 87-97.

<sup>3</sup> [Ray Stannard Baker,] "The United States and the Old World", *RT*, June 1921, pp 573-74.

<sup>4</sup> Kerr to Dove, 13 July 1920, Lothian Papers 209, fols 300-05; [Kerr,] "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance", *loc cit.*, pp 96-97.

Washington Conference.<sup>1</sup> Curtis, of course, became obsessed with China. The extent of his obsession caused considerable irritation within the Moot: Grigg, for instance, claimed that "Lionel has completely gone off the Empire".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Curtis himself explained his interest largely in terms of Imperial concerns. Economically, the Empire stood to benefit enormously by the restoration of stable conditions in China.<sup>3</sup> Politically, China was "the greatest field" wherein the principles for which the Commonwealth stood "are at issue with those of Marx".<sup>4</sup> Finally, the Far Eastern crisis was a testing-ground for the theory of Imperial co-operation, and the means by which the "Dominions will . . . be carried on by the force of events to some form of really organic union".<sup>5</sup>

Curtis lobbied furiously for a more active British policy in China. Silter was roped in to advise the Nationalist Government on financial affairs, and Feetham to investigate the future of the Shanghai Settlement. (Feetham's report concluded that Shanghai was a model for the rest of China and that extra-territoriality should last "not years, but decades".<sup>6</sup>) Curtis's own activity culminated in the publication of *The Capital Question of China* in 1932. His conclusions were surprisingly modest: merely that the Western powers should transfer their diplomatic representatives to

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<sup>1</sup> [Kerr,] "The Washington Conference", *RT*, Dec 1921, pp 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Hichens, 15 Dec 1931, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Feetham, 27 Aug 1930, Curtis Papers 3, fols 176-79.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to the "aboriginal" Moot, 6 Aug 1930, Lothian Papers 252, fols 627-32.

<sup>5</sup> Curtis, "Memorandum for Discussion at Blickling", 19 Sept 1932, Lothian Papers 268, fols 742-51.

<sup>6</sup> Summarised in [Shanghai group: Sir Frederick Whyte et al,] "Shanghai", *RT*, Sept 1931, pp 738-68.

Nanking, and that Britain should send "a statesman" to advise the government in China and instruct the public at home.<sup>1</sup> It would be difficult to find a more striking illustration of the Imperialists' faith in "character".<sup>2</sup>

By the time Curtis's book was published, the Far Eastern situation had been transformed by Japan's invasion of Manchuria. At first, the *Round Table* appeared to favour Western intervention. A failure to restore Chinese sovereignty would "precipitate the fall of the Nanking Government" and "have very far-reaching results with regard to the attitude of the Chinese towards foreign interests generally".<sup>3</sup> Gradually, however, the *Round Table's* line began to soften. It was realised that the Western powers had no stomach for a fight. Japan's "war-minded" determination was acknowledged. Finally, sufficient ambiguities were discovered to refute the argument that Manchuria was a "test-case".<sup>4</sup> The Lytton Report - which blamed both sides even-handedly - was therefore accepted, as the best of a bad job.<sup>5</sup>

The Manchurian crisis had the effect of converting Round Table interest in the Far East into deep anxiety. From now on, there was the constant danger that Japan "will repeat on a far greater scale the power

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1 Curtis, *The Capital Question of China* (London, 1932), pp 245 ff.

2 For which see Kathryn Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character* (London, 1992).

3 [Whyte,] "China, Japan and Manchuria", *RT*, March 1932, pp 266-81.

4 See in particular, [Whyte,] "The Far East", *RT*, June 1932, pp 552-68; [Hubbard,] "The Shanghai Standpoint", *RT*, June 1932, pp 569-73, and [Chancellor,] "Manchukuo", *RT*, Sept 1932, pp 808-18.

5 [P Young,] "The Lytton Report", *RT*, Dec 1932, pp 64-89.

diplomacy which succeeded so well in Manchukuo".<sup>1</sup> This fear was reinforced by the Australian Round Tablers.<sup>2</sup> In Lothian's mind, the danger of an Anglo-American breach was equally important.<sup>3</sup> He urged the Foreign Office to make a concerted effort to bring about an Anglo-American alliance to contain Japan, and he lobbied strenuously against the proposal (scouted by Jeville Chamberlain, Simon and others) to revive the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.<sup>4</sup>

The Far Eastern situation exploded again in 1937. Guy Wint thought that Japan's moves were largely the result of accidents, but he was contradicted by Lothian, who asserted that Japan was aiming at the complete domination of eastern Asia.<sup>5</sup> A further article by G E Hubbard was even more alarmist: the Pacific islands, Malaysia, Borneo, "even Australia" were now at risk.<sup>6</sup> The Round Tablers would have welcomed a policy of confrontation, but they recognised that Britain was unable to act without the support of America.<sup>7</sup> Events in the Far East thus provided an unwelcome diversion from the European crisis of the 1930s.

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- 1 [Lothian,] "Power Politics in the Pacific", *RT*, Dec 1934, p 18.
  - 2 [Piesse,] "Australia and Japan", *RT*, Dec 1933, pp 85-101; Leonie Foster, *High Hopes* (Melbourne, 1986), pp 100 ff.
  - 3 Lothian to Hodson, 29 Nov 1934, Lothian Papers 286, fol 614.
  - 4 Christopher Hall, *Britain, America and Arms Control, 1921-37* (London, 1987), pp 161-82.
  - 5 [Wint,] "Smoke and Fire in the Far East", *RT*, Sept 1937, pp 725-39; [Lothian,] "Power and Opinion in World Affairs", *RT*, Dec 1937, pp 1-8.
  - 6 [G E Hubbard,] "Japan's Challenge to the West", *RT*, March 1938, pp 230-45.
  - 7 [Lothian,] "The Commonwealth and the Dictatorships", *RT*, June 1938, pp 435-52.

### The Commonwealth and the Dictatorships

Paul Kennedy has made an excellent case for arguing that "appeasement" constituted a persistent tradition in British foreign policy, from the late nineteenth century onwards.<sup>1</sup> "Appeasement" was also a policy to which the Round Tablers had frequent (although not uniform) recourse. The balance between conciliation and confrontation was, of course, constantly shifting, and varied from country to country. The determining factor was undoubtedly the nature and extent of any threat to British interests, weighed against the advantages accruing from a policy of compromise.

That power-political calculations provided the basis of the Round Tablers' views on foreign policy is best illustrated by their attitudes to Fascist Italy. Writing for the *Round Table*, G M Trevelyan emphasised that the destruction of liberties in Italy was "not an expedient . . . but an essential part of the Fascist programme". Nevertheless, he saw no direct connection between Mussolini's internal policies and the policy which the British government should pursue. On the contrary, he urged the government to "treat [Italy's leaders] . . . as equals and as friends".<sup>2</sup> Dove expressed sympathy for Mussolini's imperial ambitions, suggesting that Anatolia might be "a hopeful place". In 1933 he was still writing of Mussolini's Italy as "a friend".<sup>3</sup>

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Mussolini's increasingly bellicose attitude towards Abyssinia failed

<sup>1</sup> Paul Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy* (London, 1983), pp 13-39.

<sup>2</sup> [Trevelyan,] "Italy under Mussolini", *RT*, Sept 1923, pp 754-63.

<sup>3</sup> Dove, "The Colonial Problem of Europe", 21 July 1926, Lothian Papers 20, fols 390-97; Dove, "Memorandum", 21 April 1933, Lothian Papers 268, fols 844-48.



to induce a change of heart. Indeed, the *Round Table's* initial reaction was one of sympathy.<sup>1</sup> Hodson complained that Lothian's attitude appeared to be that it was the condition of Abyssinia rather than the bellicosity of Italy which was the main danger to the world.<sup>2</sup>

The Moot's public attitude was transformed by Hoare's speech at the League of Nations in September 1935, declaring that Britain stood for collective sanctions against aggression. British prestige was now at stake: it would be "fatal" to let Mussolini "get away" with his plunder.<sup>3</sup> Privately, however, attitudes were rather different. Brand wrote of "this damnable sanctions clause", and thought Hoare's action disastrous. "God knows what we should do."<sup>4</sup> The subsequent débâcle proved that the League had failed in the one case where it might have been expected to succeed. The *Round Table* therefore redoubled its calls for the Covenant to be emasculated.<sup>5</sup> On the question of Anglo-Italian relations, it was hoped that steps might be taken to re-establish "mutual respect" and friendship.<sup>6</sup>

The Moot's persistent desire for friendship with Fascist Italy prefigured closely its attitude towards Nazi Germany, which presented problems different in degree but not in kind, to the extent that both were

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1 [G Fitzgerald,] "The Last Partition of Africa?", *RT*, June 1935, pp 507-23.

2 Hodson to Lothian, 16 Aug 1935, Lothian Papers 304, fols 764-66.

3 [Lothian,] "The League in Crisis", *RT*, Dec 1935 (pp 1-16), pp 7 and 14.

4 Brand to Dawson, 2 Sept 1935, Brand Papers, box 198.

5 [Lothian,] "The World Crisis", *RT*, June 1936, pp 443-60; [Lothian,] "The Commonwealth and the League", *RT*, Sept 1936, pp 655-74.

6 [C J S Sprigge,] "Britain and Italy: Past and Future", *RT*, Sept 1938, pp 708-22.

violent dictatorships with crude but possibly containable ambitions.

In the long-running debate over "appeasement", the Round Tablers have often been cast in a peculiarly conspiratorial rôle. This is especially true of Dawson and Lothian, both identified at the time by Claud Cockburn (and, through him, by Vansittart) as key members of a "Cliveden Set" intriguing to bring about British acquiescence in Hitler's foreign policy aims.<sup>1</sup> The failure of "appeasement" and the realisation of the utter barbarism of Hitler's régime resulted in an historiography characterised by recrimination and the apportioning of blame. The opprobrium cast on Dawson and Lothian reflected also on their colleagues: variously, "Milner's Kindergarten", "the Milner group", or the Round Table as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

The recent historiography of "appeasement" has been more discriminating. First, there has been a greater emphasis on the structural constraints on British policy, and a consequent downplaying of the rôle of individual personalities.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, as Robert Holland has pointed out, "with Europe once more on the Mark Standard, the basic validity of . . . [the appeasers'] insights may be better appreciated than the artificial dogmas prevailing after 1939 usually allowed".<sup>4</sup> Finally, the

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1 For the "Cliveden Set", see Michael Astor, *Tribal Feeling* (London, 1963), pp 136-47; Patricia Cockburn, *The Years of The Week* (London, 1968), pp 227-46; Richard Cockett, *Twilight of Truth* (London, 1989), pp 37 ff.

2 See, eg, A L Rowse, *All Souls and Appeasement* (London, 1961); A J P Taylor, *English History, 1914-45* (London, 1965), p 418; and, more recently, Kathryn Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character* (London, 1990), pp 271 ff.

3 The seminal work in this field is Gustav Schmidt, *The Politics and Economics of Appeasement* (Leamington Spa, 1986, English translation of *England in der Krise*, 1981). See also Wolfgang J Mommsen and Lothar Kettenacker (eds), *The Fascist Challenge and the Policy of Appeasement* (London, 1983).

4 Robert Holland, *The Pursuit of Greatness* (London, 1991), p 150.

Historiography of "appeasement" has begun to move away from the old, invented and rigid dichotomies. William Roger Louis, for instance, has delineated admirably the ambiguities and complexities in the views of one Minister who was generally regarded as an "anti-appeaser", Leo Amery.<sup>1</sup>

If the old distinction between "appeasers" and "anti-appeasers" no longer seems adequate, it would perhaps be more appropriate to view British responses to Nazi Germany as a spectrum or continuum. Within such a spectrum it might be possible to identify five main types of response: "collaboration", by which is meant a fundamental agreement with Nazi aims and ideology; "acquiescence", meaning the willingness to accept Nazi demands as and when they arose; "conciliation", by which is meant the attempt to arrange more or less limited concessions by prior negotiation; "resistance", meaning a commitment to defending the status quo; and "anti-fascism", meaning a commitment to eradicating Nazism from Germany itself.

There is no evidence for suggesting that any of the Round Tablers favoured a policy of "collaboration", in the sense outlined above. None had any sympathy for Mosley's "Blackshirts". Nor did they view continental fascists as, in the contemporary phrase, "men of the future". A *Round Table* analysis of Mussolini's doctrines in 1927 concluded that fascism was an exercise in "political archaeology".<sup>2</sup> Nazism was, in Lothian's view, even more reactionary: a movement based on "racialism and violence", "far more devastating and devitalising to the soul of Germany . . . than the evils against which the Nazis protest".<sup>3</sup> Dawson, famously, admitted

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<sup>1</sup> Wm Roger Louis, *In the Name of God, Go!* (London, 1992), pp 111 ff.

<sup>2</sup> [McClure,] "Fascist Rule after Five Years", *RT*, June 1927, pp 498-513.

<sup>3</sup> [Lothian,] "The Recoil from Freedom", *RT*, June 1933, pp 489-90.

doctoring Ebbutt's dispatches to *The Times* in order to suppress information showing the true horrors of Nazism.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, Hodson altered an article by Powys Greenwood in 1935 because the latter "sees the Nazi régime through rather too rosy spectacles".<sup>2</sup>

The starting-point for all the Round Tablers was "conciliation": this was the policy which the *Round Table* advocated consistently throughout the 1920s. As early as December 1932 Horsfall and Butler expressed doubts about this policy, in the light of Germany's slide towards autocracy.<sup>3</sup> Horsfall's doubts were strengthened by a trip to Germany which coincided with the first violent excesses of Nazi rule:

"I don't believe that anything which it would be possible to give Germany in the way of revision would satisfy it, rather the reverse, that every concession merely whets the appetite . . . . My own opinions are tending more and more to the view that . . . our influence would be far greater if we were felt to be indissoluble from France."<sup>4</sup>

Grigg visited Paris and Brussels at about the same time, and came back with similar impressions. It was "quite inconceivable that France should enter into a discussion of possible revisions of the Treaty with a Government of that kind", he wrote to Dawson.<sup>5</sup>

The doubts expressed by Butler, Horsfall and Grigg were the first indication that the question of policy towards Germany would become a

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1 *The History of The Times*, Vol IV, part 2 (London, 1952), p 734. Oliver Woods and James Bishop have pointed out that such practices are not unknown in the newspaper world, where the need to keep a correspondent in a country is often the overriding concern: *The Story of The Times* (London, 1983), p 294-96.

2 Hodson to Lothian, 8 Feb 1935, Lothian Papers 295, fols 662-63.

3 Dove to Lothian, 9 Dec 1932, Lothian Papers 268, fols 836-37.

4 Horsfall to Dove, 27 March 1933, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.

5 Grigg to Dawson, 20 March 1933, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.



matter for contention within the Moot. Nevertheless, it would be problematic to describe them at this stage as advocates of "resistance", let alone "anti-fascism" (which, until 1939, was largely the preserve of the Communist Party). Doubts about "conciliation" did not necessarily translate into opposition to the policy. "Is every attempt at redress to be nothing more than a starting point for further demands?" Grigg asked in 1934. "Yet, if concessions are warranted, and if they can ensure peace, they must be made."

The case for persevering was put most forcefully by Dove and Lothian. Dove agreed that it was "repulsive" to concede to the Nazis what had not been conceded to Stresemann or Brüning.<sup>2</sup> He also agreed that, if push came to shove, "we shall have, for the same reasons as brought us into the war in 1914, to go to war again and save France".<sup>3</sup> But it would take "four or five years" for Germany to re-arm; and in the meantime there was a "breathing space" which could be used to undermine Hitler by removing German grievances. Moreover, it was essential to be able to show that "we have done everything in our power to get the world onto a better plane" so the Dominions and (crucially) the United States would fall in line.<sup>4</sup>

Before looking at the concessions which the "conciliationists" expected to be made, it is necessary to make three points. First, they did not intend "conciliation" to be merely a series of ad hoc concessions, but

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 27 Feb 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Dove, Memorandum, 21 April 1933, Lothian Papers 208, fols 844-48.

<sup>3</sup> Dove, "British Foreign Policy", 3 May 1933, Lothian Papers 276, fols 575-76.

<sup>4</sup> Dove, "The Round Table: Note on British Policy", 7 April 1933, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1003.



hoped instead for a one-off, all-round settlement: "a moderate revision . . . which would be accepted as final".<sup>1</sup> Secondly, "if there are to be concessions, it is essential that they should be made before they can be shown to have been exacted under German threats".<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, it was "by no means certain what Germany means by revision". The aim of "conciliating" Hitler was a gamble.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it was clear that, as Norman Ebbutt put it, the Treaty of Versailles was "the most valuable tool in the agitator's bag".<sup>4</sup>

There was no disagreement within the Moot over the inevitability of changes in Germany's military position. It was frequently asserted that German re-armament was only a matter of time. The same was true of the re-militarisation of the Rhineland. As early as April 1933, Lothian made clear that the majority of the Moot regarded the use of sanctions to enforce the demilitarised zone as both unjust and unworkable.<sup>5</sup>

There was equally little debate within the Moot on the question of maintaining economic links with Germany. The Round Tablers were committed to an all-round liberalisation of world trade. Brand (who in other respects was a sceptic regarding "conciliation") played a leading rôle in the "Joint Committee" of British creditors, which ensured that short-term credits to Germany were maintained throughout the 1930s. His over-riding concern, however, was to safeguard the interests of his own bank, which had

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<sup>1</sup> Lothian to Grigg, 26 April 1933, Lothian Papers 269, fols 850-53.

<sup>2</sup> "German Foreign Policy", *RT*, Dec 1935, p 104.

<sup>3</sup> [Lothian,] "The Future of the League?", *RT*, Dec 1933, p 6.

<sup>4</sup> [Ebbutt,] "Nazi Germany", *RT*, June 1933, p 513.

<sup>5</sup> Lothian to Grigg, 26 April 1933, Lothian Papers 269, fols 850-53.

invested heavily in Germany.<sup>1</sup> Lothian's advocacy of "a sort of Ottawa 'economic Mittleuropa'"<sup>2</sup> was perhaps more controversial. Again, however, the proposal had its roots in economic liberalism. The bloc which Lothian envisaged was not intended to be highly protectionist, but a step towards a general tariff reduction.<sup>3</sup> Amery also recognised special German economic interests in eastern Europe, although he inclined to a more protectionist solution.<sup>4</sup>

The territorial settlement of Versailles was, of course, criticised at the time by the *Round Table*. An article by Toynbee in June 1933 again protested against the Treaty's ban on Austro-German union, but was non-committal on other German claims.<sup>5</sup> Privately, Lothian was prepared to go much further. As he wrote to J A Spender in April 1935, avowedly condensing his recent Burge Memorial lecture,

"I venture to prophesy that within a decade or two mankind will be organised in four or five great entities. The real question is whether that is going to be done by conquest and empire or by voluntary federation. Japan and Germany are going to set out along the road of empire, and Eastern Europe may utter a sigh of relief at being freed from the spectre of war even at the price of subjection".<sup>6</sup>

This was not an argument which Lothian was allowed to put in the *Round*

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<sup>1</sup> Neil Forbes, "London Banks, the German Standstill Agreements and 'Economic Appeasement' in the 1930s", *EHR*, Vol XL (1987), pp 571-87.

<sup>2</sup> Lothian to Smuts, 16 March 1937, Lothian Papers 333, fol 880.

<sup>3</sup> [Lothian,] "The Root of our Present Discontents", *RT*, March 1936, pp 229-38.

<sup>4</sup> Louis, *op cit*, pp 113-16.

<sup>5</sup> [Toynbee,] "Treaty Revision", *RT*, June 1933, pp 584-604.

<sup>6</sup> Lothian to J A Spender, 30 April 1935, Lothian Papers 296, fols 728-29.

*Table.* Nevertheless, he was allowed to put forward his basic premise: that eastern Europe was, economically and politically, bound to fall increasingly under German influence, and that it was not in Britain's interests to try artificially to reverse the trend.<sup>1</sup>

The Round Tablers were reluctant to see Britain making any concessions in the colonial sphere, other than by guaranteeing an "open door". Both Lloyd George and Neville Chamberlain appeared favourable to colonial restitution early in 1936, provoking a storm of Tory outrage (in which Amery was prominent). Writing in the *Round Table*, Lothian sided with his former Round Table colleague rather than with his former employer.<sup>2</sup> Another article by Hodson purported to show that the economic argument for restitution "simply does not hold water". The British Government was advised to give a "patient, straight-forward and unequivocal" no.<sup>3</sup>

The success of "conciliation" depended above all on a willingness to compromise: on the one hand, "some sacrifice on the part of the beneficiaries of the existing settlement", on the other a readiness to seek adjustments by "diplomacy or conference" rather than force.<sup>4</sup> Hitler's unwillingness to compromise overwhelmed the policy of "conciliation", forcing its advocates to choose between "acquiescence" in increasingly extreme demands and "resistance" from a position substantially weaker than in 1933. The choice was difficult, especially so because (as Brand later

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<sup>1</sup> [Lothian,] "The New World Situation", *RT*, Sept 1937, pp 717-18.

<sup>2</sup> [Lothian,] "The Root of our Present Discontents", *RT*, March 1936, pp 235-38.

<sup>3</sup> [Hodson,] "From Agadir to Nuremburg", *RT*, Dec 1936, pp 106-09.

<sup>4</sup> [Lothian,] "Power and Opinion in World Affairs", *RT*, Dec 1937, pp 15-16.

emphasised) it was almost impossible to know where to draw the line.<sup>1</sup>

Hitler's first breach of the Treaty of Versailles, re-introducing conscription in 1935, appears to have caused little stir within the Moot. The re-militarisation of the Rhineland in March 1936 went much further towards undermining the policy of "conciliation". The reaction of Dawson and Lothian was to shift towards "acquiescence". Others in the Moot reacted by shifting the other way. Hodson now argued that it was "dangerous" to suggest that "important adjustments must be made before there can be stability".<sup>2</sup> Another Round Tabler who objected to Lothian's more forward line was Curtis. As yet, however, neither Hodson nor Curtis was prepared to support a policy of "resistance". Hodson's view was that collective security was "in the long-run necessary and right", but that, until the democratic powers had sufficient force to ensure compliance, it remained "off the map".<sup>3</sup> Curtis urged, in effect, a policy of bluff. While Britain should not "say anything which could lead Germany . . . to infer that in no circumstances would we be drawn into war over eastern Europe", neither should Britain make any commitments.<sup>4</sup> Even Grigg, described by Hodson as "the most forcible advocate" of collective sanctions<sup>5</sup>, was as yet unprepared to back what he described as a policy of "unlimited liability":

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1 "Lord Brand on Geoffrey Dawson" [typescript of BBC interview, not broadcast, Feb 1962], Brand Papers, box 198.

2 Hodson to Lothian, 13 May 1936, Lothian Papers 323, fols 609-11.

3 Hodson to Curtis, 9 June 1937, RT Papers c 811, fols 116-119.

4 [Curtis,] Memorandum, Oct 1936, RT Papers c 811, fols 102-06.

5 Hodson to Lothian, 8 July 1935, Lothian Papers 304, fol 745.

"we have no right to endanger the security of the Empire for the sake of nations which do not belong to it . . . . A universal and unconditional guarantee of every existing State can lead to nothing but another awful conflagration".<sup>1</sup>

One important effect of the Rhineland crisis was to re-inforce the Round Tablers' insistence on the necessity of Empire re-armament. Gustav Schmidt has argued that "appeasement" was adopted as a counter-strategy to German re-armament largely because the alternative, British re-armament, was found unacceptable.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the Round Tablers, however, a belief in the necessity of re-armament cut across differences on policy. From 1936 onwards, the Moot called for the immediate introduction of compulsory national service.<sup>3</sup>

The Round Tablers had long criticised the ban on Austro-German union as one of the most unacceptable aspects of the Versailles settlement. Nevertheless, the manner of its accomplishment was still shocking.<sup>4</sup> While the *Round Table* still oscillated between "acquiescence" and "resistance", the balance was tipped decidedly in favour of the latter. Even Lothian deplored "the momentum and prestige that totalitarian power diplomacy has gained". The "paramount necessity" now was for "armed power" and a "defensive and political integration" of the Western democracies to prevent or defeat further unilateral acts of force.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Grigg, *The Faith of an Englishman* (London, 1936), pp 145-46.

<sup>2</sup> Schmidt, *op cit*, p 11 and *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> [Hodson,] "The Army in Imperial Defence", *RT*, Dec 1936, pp 23-38.

<sup>4</sup> Louis, *op cit*, p 116, sees this as the decisive moment in Amery's change of attitude to Germany.

<sup>5</sup> [Lothian,] "The Commonwealth and the Dictatorships", *RT*, June 1938, pp 435-52. Cf Lothian to Sir Neville Henderson, 14 March 1938, Lothian Papers 362, fols 394-95.



The Sudeten crisis confirmed the direction in which Round Table policy was heading. In May 1938 Lothian urged Halifax to make it clear that Britain would side with Czechoslovakia if Germany resorted to force.<sup>1</sup> At the time of Munich, he feared "another Hoare-Laval plan" which would "split the country and the democratic world".<sup>2</sup> Only Dawson still clung to the policy of "conciliation", primarily on Imperial grounds:

"No one who sat in this place, as I did during the autumn of '38, with almost daily visitations from eminent Canadians and Australians, could fail to realize that war with Germany at that time would have been misunderstood and resented from end to end of the Empire".<sup>3</sup>

Horsfall's post-mortem was gloomy. Chamberlain and Daladier were not only guilty of "naïveté in negotiation", they were also guilty of "administrative incapacity". Even now there was talk of further concessions, but this was "no moment for negotiating from weakness".<sup>4</sup> Hodson surveyed the reactions to the crisis in America, India and the Dominions, and found overwhelming evidence of disillusionment and a loss of British prestige.<sup>5</sup> In his last article for the *Round Table*, Lothian urged the Western democracies to form "a Grand Alliance against aggression" to ensure the ultimate triumph of liberal-democratic values.<sup>6</sup>

This examination of the Round Tablers' tortuous passage from

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- 1 Lothian to Halifax, 31 May 1938, Lothian Papers 362, fol 364.
  - 2 Lothian to Nancy Astor, 16 Sept 1938, quoted in Christopher Sykes, *Nancy: The Life of Nancy Astor* (London, 1972), p 393.
  - 3 Dawson to Neville Chamberlain, 8 Nov 1940, Dawson Papers 81, fol 48.
  - 4 [Horsfall,] "The Crisis and the Future", *RT*, Dec 1938, pp 1-12.
  - 5 [Hodson et al,] "Overseas Reactions to the Crisis", *RT*, Dec 1938, pp 28-57.
  - 6 [Lothian,] "The Grand Alliance against Aggression", *RT*, June 1939, pp 441-56.

"conciliation" to "resistance" points to a number of conclusions. Perhaps the most striking is the extent to which the labels "appeaser" and "anti-appeaser" confuse the issues involved. Of crucial importance here was the inability of the sceptics to formulate alternative strategies. This in turn reflected a basic agreement on assumptions. Two in particular stand out: that Britain had few interests in eastern Europe, and that her true interests lay in an "Oceanic" group centred on the Empire/Commonwealth and the United States.

Ritchie Ovendale, in his study of the "English-speaking world" and "Appeasement", concluded that the Dominions and the United States had little direct influence on the formulation of Chamberlain's policy, and that they were mainly used as an excuse to justify policies formulated for other reasons.<sup>1</sup> At first sight, this would appear to indicate a large difference between Chamberlain and the Round Tablers. The real situation was by no means as clear-cut. Some of the Dominion Round Tablers (such as Duncan) were keen supporters of a policy of "Oceanic" detachment. Others were not. The Toronto member J M Macdonnell, for instance, thought that "the condition of . . . keeping the Empire together is to be keen on and loyal to the League".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Round Tablers certainly believed that a policy of "conciliation" and detachment was supported by a majority in the Dominions. Even so, the relationship between Round Table and Dominion views was not entirely one-way. Lothian wrote to a number of Dominion leaders, urging them to take a more active rôle in lobbying the

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<sup>1</sup> Ritchie Ovendale, *"Appeasement" and the English-speaking World, 1937-39* (Cardiff, 1975); cf Robert Holland, *Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance, 1918-39* (London, 1981), pp 167-205.

<sup>2</sup> Macdonnell to Lothian, 20 July 1936, Lothian Papers 321, fols 460-61.

British government.<sup>1</sup>

The extent of the Round Tablers' influence is, of course, impossible to measure. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the *Round Table* was remarkably consistent in its advocacy of "conciliation" towards Germany from 1919 onwards. In the 1920s the Moot found itself in frequent opposition to Government policy. In the 1930s, no British government attempted the kind of one-off, all-round settlement which the Round Tablers thought essential. Ironically, just as Neville Chamberlain shifted British policy towards a more accommodating attitude to Germany, the Round Tablers themselves were moving firmly in the opposite direction. Although Lothian and the *Round Table* magazine perhaps helped to create the right atmosphere for Chamberlain's policies, the Round Table must be discounted as a direct influence on his Government.

#### Federalism Revived

The deteriorating international situation of the late 1930s gave force to the federal ideas which had inspired the Round Table's creation.

Curtis, of course, had never given up his federalism, although he was forced to admit that "we have . . . to think in longer periods of time than we did at the outset".<sup>2</sup> In the late 1920s he had started work on a third series of *Round Table Studies*, whose purpose was to "explain the British Commonwealth so far as to enable its citizens to see better how to

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<sup>1</sup> See, eg, Lothian to Mackenzie King, 4 June 1936, Lothian Papers 321, fol 482; Lothian to Smuts, 8 July 1936, Lothian Papers 324, fols 700-03.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, "Memorandum for Discussion at Blickling", 19 Sept 1932, Lothian Papers 268, fol 751.

discharge the duties which it lays upon them".<sup>1</sup> His work consisted largely of a heterodox and discursive sweep through history, tracing a conflict between the "Jewish" and "Graeco-Roman" ideals, and describing the emergence of "Commonwealth" from the latter. Professor George E Catlin was probably not alone in finding himself "unable entirely to comprehend [Curtis's] drift".<sup>2</sup> The Moot decided against sending Curtis's final volume to the Dominion groups<sup>3</sup>, and the Round Table connection was only briefly mentioned when the work was published, as *Civitas Dei*.

Although Curtis's volumes concluded with a plea for federation - if necessary, starting just with Britain, Australia and New Zealand - the leisurely manner of his producing them and the lack of a specific scheme are indications that even he, at this stage, realised that federation was not practical politics. The same was true of Lothian, despite his assertion in 1935 that events were "driving the issue to the front with tremendous speed".<sup>4</sup>

A debate on the Moot's attitude to Imperial federation was prompted by the impending twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Round Table*, towards the end of 1935. Brand and Grigg both argued strongly against any re-assertion of federalist belief by the Moot as such; Curtis and Lothian both argued equally strongly the other way, although Lothian cautioned against any explicit mention of Curtis or endorsement of his writings.<sup>5</sup> After

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Lord Chelmsford, 14 March 1928, Curtis Papers 3, fols 32-34.

<sup>2</sup> Catlin to Kerr, 5 June 1929, Lothian Papers 234, fol 52.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, 19 to 20 Oct 1935, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Lothian, *Pacifism is Not Enough* (London, 1935), p 48.

<sup>5</sup> Lothian to Hodson, 6 Aug 1935, Lothian Papers 304, fols 761-63; cf Curtis to Macadam, 26 April 1945, Curtis Papers 98, fol 73.

lengthy debate the federalist view prevailed, and it was therefore announced that

"the spirit and purpose of the review and of the groups of men responsible for it remain the same. The organic commonwealth of free peoples, as the only permanent foundation for liberty and peace, is still a vision, but it is a vision that has inspired twenty-five years of effort, and that will continue to inspire the renewal of that effort in the years to come".<sup>1</sup>

Again the lack of urgency was clear, although so, too, was the absence of any idea that the Commonwealth had passed beyond the stage when federalism would be practical at all.

It was only in the last few months of peace that federalism once more became an issue capable of inspiring and mobilising significant numbers of activists. Both Lothian and Curtis set about lending their support and attempting to provide guidance. They were particularly excited by Clarence Streit's *Union Now*, published simultaneously in America and England in the spring of 1939, and urging a thoroughgoing union of all fifteen democracies. Lothian and Curtis thought Streit wrong in including economic union, omitting dependencies, and modelling his proposed constitution on the centralised American state. Nevertheless, Lothian especially realised America to be the key to a new system, and therefore welcomed Streit's book with fervour. He urged his American contacts to organise support for Streit, while Curtis set about recommending the book to all and sundry in England.<sup>2</sup> Hodson was pressed into writing two appreciative articles for

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<sup>1</sup> [Hodson,] "Twenty Five Years", *RT*, Sept 1935, pp 653-59.

<sup>2</sup> See, eg, Lothian to Frank Aydelotte, 6 March 1939, Lothian Papers 369, fol 42; Curtis to Lionel Robbins, 6 June 1939, Curtis Papers 16, fols 174-75.



*the Round Table.*<sup>1</sup>

Somewhat less enthusiasm was felt for "Federal Union", a purely British organisation launched in autumn 1938 by Patrick Ransome, Charles Kimber and Derek Rawnsley. Curtis initially suggested to Lothian that the two of them could "model our attitude towards these young men on the way in which Lord Milner treated us".<sup>2</sup> Curtis tried hard to convert the younger men to an Atlantic rather than European federation, and, when he failed, attempted to oust them. He soon found, however, that they were not to be overawed, and, indeed, that they had plenty of other potential Milners, including Lord Beveridge. Curtis and Lothian parted company with the Federal Unionists in some bitterness. As Kimber later put it, the Round Tablers had been "not helpful".<sup>3</sup>

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1 "Union Now", *RT*, June 1939, pp 476-88, and "Union: Oceanic or Continental", *RT*, Sept 1939, pp 733-44.

2 Curtis to Lothian, 2 April 1939, Lothian Papers 386, fol 734.

3 Sir Charles Kimber, "Federal Union" in Peter Catterall and C J Morris (eds), *Britain and the Threat to Stability in Europe, 1918-45* (London, 1993), pp 107-09. See also Andrea Bosco, "Lothian, Curtis, Kimber and the Federal Union Movement", *J Contemp Hist*, vol 23, no 3 (July 1988), pp 465-502.

#### 9. WAR AND ADJUSTMENT, 1939-49

Five months after the fall of Singapore, Duncan wrote gloomily from South Africa of a widespread belief that, even if the Allies won the war, "the British Empire will be gone beyond recovery".<sup>1</sup> Many historians would agree with this prognosis. The years 1939-49 saw a series of humiliating military defeats for Britain, a radical diminution of her economic and financial power, the first sterling crisis, the independence of Jordan, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Burma and Israel, and the secession of Ireland. Above all, the war and its aftermath confirmed the emergence of two colossal "superpowers", increasingly antagonistic, but sharing a rhetorical attachment to anti-imperialism. As early as 1940, Britain and its Empire was financially and militarily dependent on American goodwill. As Sir Michael Howard famously wrote, "the British Empire had come to an end, almost as imperceptibly as it had begun".<sup>2</sup>

What is most striking in retrospect is the remarkable resilience of the Empire-Commonwealth before 1939, achieved by a judicious combination of concession and consolidation, and by skilful management and diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> The Round Tablers themselves believed that still more could have been achieved, given the political will in Britain and the Dominions. Did they finally recognise the writing on the wall in 1940, 1945 or 1949? On any reckoning, the Empire/Commonwealth would have to change. But was it inevitable that it would be "gone beyond recovery"?

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<sup>1</sup> Duncan to Curtis, 28 July 1942, RT Papers c 813, fol 88.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment* (London, 1972), p 147.

<sup>3</sup> John Darwin, "Imperialism in Decline?", *Hist Journal*, vol XXIII (1980), pp 657-79.

The London Moot and the Round Table Magazine

The war caused significant problems of organisation and commitment within the London Moot. Both older and younger members naturally made a priority of war service. Monthly meetings continued, but attendance was irregular. The Moot spent much of the war "living from hand to mouth".<sup>1</sup> A similar experience appears to have afflicted the Round Table groups in the Dominions. While these continued to send articles for the *Round Table* magazine, they too found it hard just "to carry on".<sup>2</sup>

The numerical preponderance of "aboriginal" London Round Tablers was broken by the time the war ended. Lionel Hitchens was killed by a German bomb, in October 1940. Two months later Lord Lothian died (perhaps unnecessarily).<sup>3</sup> Sir Patrick Duncan died in July 1943, and Geoffrey Dawson in November 1944.

Other long-standing Round Tablers remained committed to the Moot, but in many cases war-related work made continuous and active participation difficult. Curtis was an energetic organiser of the Chatham House servicemen's study groups at Oxford. Brand spent much of the war in Washington, first as Chairman of the British Food Mission, then as Treasury representative. Grigg filled various junior ministerial posts in London before succeeding Lord Moyne as Minister Resident in the Middle East in 1944. Coupland spent the middle part of the war in India. Only Horsfall and Malcolm remained in London throughout.

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- 1 Dawson to Feetham, 31 March 1943, Dawson Papers 83, fols 77-80.
  - 2 T H Laby to Curtis, 23 March 1943, (Melbourne file,) RT (O) Papers.
  - 3 Lothian died of uraemia, after refusing treatment on religious grounds. Curtis survived a similar illness the following year.

Three of those recruited in the 1930s - Hodson, Macadam and Harlow - put their propaganda skills to good use in the Empire Division of the Ministry of Information. Hodson subsequently went to India in 1941-42 as the Viceroy's constitutional adviser; on his return, he again entered the service of the home government, in the Ministry of Production. Maud was busy with administrative work at the Ministries of Food and Reconstruction. Lord Hailey occupied a quasi-official position in the Colonial Office, reporting on *Native Administration and Political Development* in Africa, helping to keep the Belgian Congo within the Allied orbit, and propagandising the cause of Empire in the United States and Canada.

Keeping the *Round Table* magazine going was the main preoccupation of the Moot. Hodson resigned as editor in September 1939, and was succeeded by Coupland. The latter was also anxious to "pull my weight" in the war effort by working for the Ministry of Information, but he was dissuaded by Brand, who insisted that editing the *Round Table* was itself "an important war work".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Coupland resigned after seeing the March 1941 issue off the press, in order to concentrate on his Indian work. The editor of *The Economist*, Geoffrey Crowther, was brought in to edit the June 1941 issue, before flying to the United States on Ministry of Information business. Crowther remained a member of the Moot until October 1944, but he was a relatively infrequent attender.

Curtis was anxious to persuade Dawson to edit the *Round Table* following his resignation from *The Times*, announced in July 1941. Nevertheless, Dawson suggested that the magazine needed "someone younger

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<sup>1</sup> Coupland to Brand, 25 July 1940, and Brand to Coupland, 26 July 1940, Brand Papers, box 153.

and fresher".<sup>1</sup> Dawson himself found such a person in the form of Henry Brooke, MP, whom Dawson considered "to 'hold the right thought' about most things".<sup>2</sup> Brooke edited the next three issues, from September 1941 to June 1942, but found the strain of doing so increasingly difficult. Hailey persuaded Brooke to give up and Dawson to take on the job.<sup>3</sup> Brooke remained an active member of the Moot until 1966.

Dawson's editorship lasted from September 1942 to November 1944. Macadam thought Dawson's first issue "much the best we have produced since the war".<sup>4</sup> Sadly, Dawson's failing health necessitated first the assistance of Malcolm and then the search for another editor. Various candidates were considered, including Giles Alington and Rohan Butler. Eventually the position was offered to Dermot Morrah, an All Souls prize fellow and a leader-writer for *The Times* who had joined the Moot in 1943, on Dawson's recommendation. Morrah's position was at first insecure: he was appointed "acting" editor with a four-man advisory committee consisting of Malcolm, Hodson, Horsfall and Macadam. The editorship (now a part-time post paying £500 pa) was offered to Hodson in December 1945, but the latter insisted that "the general need for bringing the R.T. abreast of the times" required a full-time editor, and he was unwilling to consider the proposal of a merely part-time post.<sup>5</sup> The offer was renewed early in 1946, but by then Hodson was settling into a new job at *The Sunday Times*. Morrah

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1 Dawson to Curtis, 2 April 1941, RT Papers c 861, fol 11.

2 Dawson to Feetham, 31 March 1943, Dawson Papers 83, fols 77-80.

3 Hailey to Malcolm, Grigg, Horsfall and Macadam, 1 June 1942, RT Papers c 862, fol 59.

4 Macadam to Dawson, [Sept 1942,] RT Papers c 862, fol 104.

5 Hodson to Macadam, 13 Dec 1945, RT Papers c 863, fol 132.



remained editor of the *Round Table* (combining the position with leader-writing for *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*) until the end of 1965.

Morrah's editorship, despite its uncertain start, gave the *Round Table* a much-needed continuity. Morrah himself was

"a very individual and richly-flavoured personality . . . deeply attached to the Roman Catholic Church, the tridentine mass, the constitution, common law, all ritual both sacred and secular, heraldry (and) the medieval concepts of feudalism and status".<sup>1</sup>

Morrah's somewhat anachronistic views were not prominently displayed in the magazine he edited. Undoubtedly a large part of the reason was that, like Dove, he saw himself as "the scribe who puts on paper the collective views of the Moot".<sup>2</sup> This attitude gave a renewed impetus to the *Round Table's* efforts to formulate a corporate policy.

The Moot was strengthened in the late 1940s by the recruitment of three new members, all of whom were to remain actively involved until the 1970s and later: Nicholas Mansergh, Denzil Marris and Sir Olaf Caroe.<sup>3</sup> Mansergh, from an Irish Protestant family, was another wartime employee of the Ministry of Information, and later one of the foremost Commonwealth historians in post-war Britain. His views were fervently Anglophile but essentially pragmatic. Denzil Marris provided a double continuity, both with his father Sir William and with Lazard Brothers, of which he was Managing Director from 1947 to 1971. Wartime service with the Ministry of Economic Warfare and the Washington embassy, and an important rôle at the

<sup>1</sup> Charles Monteith in Lord Blake and C S Nichols (eds), *Dictionary of National Biography, 1971-80* (1986), p 590.

<sup>2</sup> Morrah to Curtis, 16 Jan 1946, Curtis Papers 98, fol 92.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Halifax agreed to join the Moot in 1946, but appears not to have attended any meetings. John Holt, a businessman with shipping interests, was briefly a member, from 1948 to 1950.

Marshall Plan and Washington conferences, gave political depth to his considerable economic and financial expertise. Caroe's interests were geopolitical and strategic. A former Indian Civil Servant and the last British Governor of the North-West Frontier Province (returning to England "with a sense of having been almost mortally wounded"<sup>1</sup>), he wrote many *Round Table* articles on the Middle East and Asia.

Finance was less of a problem than it had been in the 1930s, largely because of a £1000 pa bequest from Abe Bailey, who died in 1940. The *Round Table* also received £250 pa from Sir Ernest Oppenheimer from 1939 to 1944.<sup>2</sup> A secondary factor was the lower rate of remuneration paid to editors after 1939. (Dawson refused to accept any payment at all.) The magazine account showed an excess of income over expenditure in 1944-45,<sup>3</sup> although this proved a short-lived phenomenon. By 1949, the expenses of producing the magazine were £1340 more than the income from sales, and the *Round Table* was once again eating into its capital reserves.<sup>4</sup>

The war inevitably led to a reduction in *Round Table* sales, which fell from 3672 copies in June 1939 (with another 748 distributed free) to 2751 in June 1943 (and only 212 distributed free).<sup>5</sup> The Moot considered halving the price of the magazine for the duration of the war, but decided

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1 Caroe, "Lionel and O.C.", [Aug 1962,] RT Papers c 868, fols 101-05.

2 "The Round Table Ltd.: Report on Accounts", 19 April 1940, Brand Papers, box 153.

3 "Points for the Council's Report", [May 1945,] RT Papers c 863, fol 59.

4 "Annual Accounts 1949-50", Brand Papers, box 171.

5 Minutes of RT Meeting, 14 June 1945, RT (O) Papers. New Zealand was still the *Round Table's* best overseas market, taking more than twice as many copies as Australia, and more than Canada and the USA combined: Minutes of RT meeting, 2 July 1941, *ibid*.

against such a move "since it was thought that the influence of the Round Table would not be substantially increased by an increase in the number of subscribers and purchasers".<sup>1</sup> After the war, the *Round Table's* circulation revived, before resuming its slow but steady decline in the 1950s.

#### War Aims and the Federal Debate

In contrast to the First World War, there was considerable confusion over British war aims. This point was emphasised by Duncan in the early months of the war. For what, he asked, was the British Empire fighting? To liberate Poland? To vindicate the "principle of non-aggression"? To crush Hitlerism? In his view, the British Empire, "the most vulnerable of all the Great Powers", had stumbled into the war without any clear idea of its purpose.<sup>2</sup>

The crux of the problem was the future of Germany. The Moot agreed that there could not be another "peace to end peace". Any post-war settlement must be one which could "be negotiated with a liberal German Government".<sup>3</sup> Yet the Moot harboured few illusions as to the state of German opinion. Indeed, it seemed clear that "most Germans . . . are far more devoted to Hitler than they ever were to the Kaiser".<sup>4</sup>

How, therefore, was peace to be secured? One suggestion - frequently referred to as the "French" solution - was to partition Germany and deprive

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, 24 Jan 1940, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Duncan to Curtis, 14 Nov 1939, RT Papers c 813, fol 87.

<sup>3</sup> [Coupland,] "War and Peace", RT, Dec 1939, p 21.

<sup>4</sup> "Inside Germany", RT, March 1940, p 341; see also "Germany from Within", RT, March 1944, pp 115-20, describing Hitler as "genuinely popular".

her of her industrial base. Yet this would certainly not make Germany "liberal". An alternative solution was put forward by Sir William Marris. Germany should be subjected to a long period of "trusteeship": "a retelling, with variations, of the story with which we are familiar in the Colonies and India and South Africa".<sup>1</sup> Here again, however, the costs and the dangers were clear. Many in the Moot therefore despaired of formulating a set of war aims more comprehensive than "the negative fact that we cannot come to terms with Hitler".<sup>2</sup>

The Moot's reticence infuriated Curtis: "the *Round Table* in particular was founded to influence public opinion on those long-distance (and even middle-distance) problems which politicians, government servants and journalists combine to ignore". War aims - or, as Curtis preferred, "peace aims" - were the very thing the *Round Table* existed to discuss. That the magazine was not doing so was all the more lamentable in that, in Curtis's view, the *Round Table* did have a coherent "peace aim": federalism, as outlined in Hodson's *Round Table* articles of September 1935 and June and September 1939.<sup>3</sup>

Curtis claimed that the war had brought federalism into the realm of practical politics. There was some justification for this claim. Even in the Foreign Office federalism enjoyed a brief popularity, culminating in Churchill's offer of a permanent Anglo-French Union, in June 1940.<sup>4</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Marris, "Some Reflections About War Aims", 31 March 1940, RT Papers c 784, fols 8-12.

<sup>2</sup> Coupland to Brand, 21 Aug 1940, Brand Papers, box 153.

<sup>3</sup> Curtis to Hailey, 8 Sept 1941, Curtis Papers 98, fols 25-26.

<sup>4</sup> Andrea Bosco, "Federal Union, Chatham House, The Foreign Office and Anglo-French Union in Spring 1940" in Bosco (ed), *The Federal Idea*, Volume 1 (London, 1991).



August 1940, Curtis urged the Round Table to exert pressure on the Government to extend its offer to all the Dominions and to the governments-in-exile of Norway, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Poland and Bohemia "should be invited to consider . . . the status of a British Dominion as it was before 1914".<sup>1</sup>

In Curtis's mind, there was no longer any incompatibility between the oceanic and continental dimensions of federalism. This was by no means clear to others in the Moot. "What if the Dominions rejected the idea and the others jumped at it?" asked Horsfall. "We should find ourselves overnight a continental power and little else."<sup>2</sup> Brand argued that the most striking fact of the situation was that "we are dependent on the United States". Union with a handful of European states presently under Hitler's heel "would . . . be decisive as against any further association with the United States and the Dominions".<sup>3</sup> In December 1941 the *Round Table* published an article by Brand which described as "entirely impracticable" any federation involving the United States. Brand made clear his belief that any federation not involving the United States would be unable to maintain international security.<sup>4</sup>

Curtis threatened to resign, and to take Bailey's £1000 pa with him. He claimed to be continuing the work for which the Round Table was founded, and to which Lothian had dedicated his life.<sup>5</sup> The record of Lothian's

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<sup>1</sup> "Personal View of Lionel Curtis on the line to be followed by the Round Table", 17 Sept 1940, RT Papers c 784, fols 13-16.

<sup>2</sup> Horsfall, "The Round Table", 26 Sept 1940, *ibid*, fols 20-22.

<sup>3</sup> Brand, "Memorandum", [circulated 3 Oct 1940,] *ibid*, fols 18-19.

<sup>4</sup> [Brand,] "Anglo-American Co-operation", *RT*, Dec 1941, pp 5-16.

<sup>5</sup> Curtis to Hailey, 23 Dec 1941 (draft), Curtis Papers 98, fols 35-39; Curtis to Macadam, 8 Jan 1942, *ibid*, fol 42.



last meeting with the Moot, in November 1940, contradicted him: Lothian had then argued for an "Amphictyonic Council" for the United States and the British Commonwealth, but "no separate plea . . . for Imperial Federation".<sup>1</sup> According to Malcolm, Imperial federation was one point the Moot could agree on: the majority was "all for the policy of the earliest possible organic union with the Dominions". The "point really is that what we don't agree to is the idea of going for union with the U.S.A. now (à la Streit)".<sup>2</sup>

Malcolm undoubtedly exaggerated the support for Imperial federation within the Moot. He continued to believe that Imperial federation was both practicable and likely, although he thought a start might have to be made with just Australia and New Zealand.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, he rejected Curtis's particular scheme, on the grounds "that Union to be workable would have to be very close indeed - which would of course increase Dominion and perhaps U.K. reluctance to accept it".<sup>4</sup>

Grigg, Horsfall and possibly Coupland were by now firm advocates of co-operation per se. Grigg urged the Moot to dissociate itself completely from Curtis's views. However, Grigg's own attempt to define Round Table aims, towards the end of 1944, had, according to Macadam, no chance of

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1 Coupland, "Lord Lothian's Last Talk at Cliveden", pasted into minutes of RT meeting, 30 March 1941, RT (O) Papers. Curtis thought Coupland's version "distinctly coloured by his own point of view": Curtis to Hailey, 13 Oct 1941, Curtis Papers 98, fol 31.

2 Malcolm to Hodson, 16 Jan 1942, RT Papers c 875, fols 19-20.

3 Ibid.

4 Malcolm to Curtis, 16 Dec 1943, ibid. fols 121-22; cf Malcolm, "'Decision' and 'Action'", *Agenda*, Vol 1, No 2 (April 1942), pp 184-89.

being accepted by the rest of the Moot.<sup>1</sup>

Brand also opposed Curtis's federalism. He was consistently hostile towards integration with Europe, and he found "the idea of a world state with 1000 million Asiatics - one man one vote - just dreadful". Nevertheless, at this stage he opposed Empire federalism on pragmatic grounds. He still held as the ideal "the unity of the British Commonwealth", but he now doubted whether either the Dominions or Britain could agree to an "organic union" which did not include America. This, he realised, was a much longer-term project.<sup>2</sup> Hailey was more sympathetic to Curtis's views, describing himself as "a convert" after reading *Decision*.<sup>3</sup> Like Brand, however, he regarded the attitude of America as decisive.<sup>4</sup>

Dawson characteristically refused to commit himself either to Curtis's views or to those of his critics. Indeed, the "quarrel . . . seems to me to be largely imaginary and in any case likely to be solved by events". While Dawson thus favoured an "attitude of vigil and waiting on events", this did not mean that he dissented "from [Curtis's] general views on the future of the British Commonwealth".<sup>5</sup>

The younger Round Tablers sought to mediate between Curtis and the rest of the Moot. In May 1945, Macadam suggested to Hodson that

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<sup>1</sup> Macadam to Grigg, 15 Nov 1944, RT Papers c 863, fol 35.

<sup>2</sup> Brand to Curtis, 13 Aug 1943, Curtis Papers 98, fols 57-62. Curtis himself never supported "one man one vote" for India and other non-European countries, although Hodson did: Hodson to Curtis, 20 Dec 1941, RT Papers c 784, fols 36-38.

<sup>3</sup> Hailey to Curtis, 17 July 1941, Curtis Papers 98, fol 23.

<sup>4</sup> Hailey to Curtis, 3 Oct 1941, *ibid*, fols 29-30.

<sup>5</sup> Dawson to Curtis, 14 Oct 1942, RT Papers c 784, fols 45-46. Curtis accused Dawson of being "Asquithian": Curtis to Dawson, 19 Oct 1942, *ibid*, fols 52-54.

"we should try to persuade the rest of the Moot to agree, as many of them do, that Lionel's ideas are sound, the only difference of opinion being as to the practicability of them at the present time".<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, by now a large part of the problem was Curtis himself, and his dogmatic insistence on "100 per cent. submission to his point of view".<sup>2</sup> Coupland reported from Oxford that Curtis was becoming "so offensive . . . that I have to avoid him as much as possible".<sup>3</sup> Even Macadam was driven to describe him as "the square peg in the Round Table".<sup>4</sup>

#### Commonwealth Co-operation: the Dominions in Wartime

With the "lamentable exception" of Eire<sup>5</sup>, the self-governing Dominions followed Britain into war in September 1939, as they had done twenty-five years earlier. In Australia and New Zealand, belligerency was considered automatic. Curtis appeared to favour a similar doctrine, implying in an article for the *Round Table* that there was no such thing as a Dominion right of neutrality; but on this point the Moot was divided, and his article was amended accordingly.<sup>6</sup>

The informal arrangements which had characterised Anglo-Dominion relations in the interwar years had clearly failed to prevent war - as,

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<sup>1</sup> Macadam to Hodson, 14 May 1945, RT Papers c 863, fol 56.

<sup>2</sup> Grigg to Sir Herbert Baker, 11 March 1942, Grigg Papers, MSS Microfilm 1005.

<sup>3</sup> Coupland to Grigg, 9 Oct 1943, (Lothian box), RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Macadam to Crowther, 22 June 1943, RT Papers c 862, fol 131.

<sup>5</sup> [Mansergh.] "The Conference of 1944", RT, Sept 1944, pp 311-17.

<sup>6</sup> Coupland to Brand, 20 Aug 1940, Brand Papers, box 153. The article was an obituary of Abe Bailey, the amended version of which appeared in RT, Sept 1940, pp 743-46.

indeed, had the League of Nations, devotion to which had proved a major obstacle to Commonwealth integration. It therefore seemed clear to the Round Table "that we must plan to make the [Commonwealth] system stronger in the future than in the past".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the existence of different, and at times conflicting, pressures made it difficult to arrive at any firm conclusions concerning the future direction of Anglo-Dominion relations. Horsfall complained that the whole exercise was "hardly less speculative than to enter for one of Mr Littlewood's pools".<sup>2</sup>

Smuts was prominent in urging the development of new Commonwealth machinery which would enable South Africa and the other Dominions to participate more fully in regional decision-making. On the other hand, he was firmly opposed to the kind of federalism which Curtis espoused.<sup>3</sup> (Duncan thought Curtis's scheme, shorn of its European dimension, both "attractive" and "a necessity", and he believed that South Africa would join.<sup>4</sup>) A more worrying consideration, however, was the strength of Afrikaner republicanism, and the Koot was certainly aware of the weaknesses in Smuts's coalition.<sup>5</sup>

In Canada, relations with the United States were the primary consideration, but it was an open question whether those relations provided an obstacle to, or could be tied in with, closer Commonwealth integration.

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1 [Hodson,] "The Commonwealth and the Settlement", *RT*, Sept 1943, pp 306-12.

2 Horsfall, "The Round Table", 26 Sept 1940, *RT Papers* c 784, fols 20-22.

3 Smuts to Dawson, 26 Jan 1940, *Dawson Papers* 81, fols 29-30.

4 Duncan to Malcolm, 26 April 1942, *RT Papers* c 875, fols 33-35.

5 See, eg, Malcolm to Curtis, 20 March 1942, *RT Papers* c 875, fol 27. The South African *Round Table* was more upbeat.

Initially, the Canadian *Round Table* was optimistic, believing that the Ogdensburg Agreement of August 1940 paved the way for "a more profound union" of the whole "English-speaking world".<sup>2</sup> By 1944, however, it was clear that the majority of Canadians was "equally opposed both to the centralization and [to] the dissolution of the Commonwealth".<sup>3</sup>

The conflict in the Far East brought the Pacific Dominions into the front line of the war. Initially, the effect was to underline their dependence on the United States. The Australian *Round Table* defended Curtin's "Australia looks to America" article of December 1941.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, few Australians believed that co-operation with the United States would be detrimental to the Anglo-Dominion relationship.<sup>5</sup> Curtin and his colleagues made much of the running in proposing ways to strengthen Commonwealth co-operation.

On the main point at issue within the Moct - not so much whether federalism was desirable, as whether it was practicable - the evidence of Canadian and South African opinion overwhelmingly supported Curtis's critics. The evidence from Australia and New Zealand indicated that support for some form of closer integration was not only possible but likely. Indeed, H McClure Smith, the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, informed Curtis in 1946 that "if Australia and New Zealand were the only

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<sup>2</sup> "Canada", *RT*, March 1941, pp 340-57.

<sup>3</sup> [George W Brown,] "Canada: the Future of the British Commonwealth", *RT*, March 1944, pp 186-92. The following quarter, the *Round Table* reported an opinion poll showing 49% of Canadians in favour of the status quo, 21% for inclusion in the US, and 24% for independence: "Canada", *RT*, June 1944, pp 270-76.

<sup>4</sup> [K H Bailey,] "Australia", *RT*, June 1942, pp 416-22.

<sup>5</sup> See, eg, P F Irvine to Curtis, 18 June 1942, Curtis Papers 98, fol 45.



Dominions whose consent was needed, it would not be difficult to secure some, at least, of the Imperial machinery which you and I believe to be necessary".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, union between Britain and the two antipodean Dominions (even if it had been possible) was clearly a different proposition to Imperial federation, let alone to the kind of "union of democracies" which Curtis now advocated.

Uncertainty regarding South Africa's future direction apart, there at least seemed little reason to believe that the Commonwealth was in the process of dissolution. The Moot was therefore increasingly confident in advocating new machinery for strengthening "functional" co-operation between Britain and the Dominions. Various measures were urged: more frequent Conferences, joint sessions of Parliamentary delegations, a permanent secretariat, institutionalised exchange and contact at civil service level, and "the organisation of a common system of defence".<sup>2</sup> The emerging structure of the United Nations gave further grounds for hoping that the Dominions would confront "the centrifugal forces in Imperial development" in order to "share in the permanent leadership of the world".<sup>3</sup> Only thus could Britain, let alone the Dominions, hope to "command the authority of a world Power comparable to the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.". <sup>4</sup>

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1 H McClure Smith to Curtis, 21 June 1946, (ed ctee file,) RT (O) Papers. For similar opinions from New Zealand, see, eg H F von Haast to Hodson, 24 July 1941, RT Papers c 784, fols 41-43; Sir James Grose to Curtis, 4 March 1943, Curtis Papers 98, fol 68.

2 [Morrah,] "Organization of Security", RT, Sept 1944, pp 299-304; cf [Mansergh,] "The Conference of 1944", *ibid.* pp 311-17.

3 [Morrah,] "Concert of the World", RT, Dec 1944, pp 3-9.

4 "Common Counsel", RT, March 1944, p 107.

### Federalism and Postwar Foreign Policy

"The fat is in the fire again", Macadam exclaimed, in May 1945.<sup>1</sup> The immediate reason was a request from the Melbourne group for a re-statement of Round Table aims, to be used in recruiting new members. Curtis now demanded that the Moot should make a definite choice between federalism and co-operation, and that the losers should resign.<sup>2</sup>

Hodson was given the difficult task of producing a document "which would be acceptable to all members of the Moot, including Mr Curtis".<sup>3</sup> Hodson performed this task with considerable skill, although, significantly, Brand and Grigg (now Lord Altrincham) were absent from most of the meetings which discussed his draft.<sup>4</sup> The resulting document was sent to the various Round Table groups early in November 1945, with the endorsement of the Moot.

As Morrah later remarked, some degree of "blurring" was implicit in the Round Table's statement.<sup>5</sup> Curtis was no doubt unhappy with the observation that federalism was not "immediately practical politics"; some of his critics could hardly have welcomed the assertion that co-operation was at best "a stopgap and a pis aller". On the whole, Hodson's memorandum inclined towards the federalist view, albeit in terms more discriminating than Curtis's own.

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<sup>1</sup> Macadam to Hodson, 14 May 1945, RT Papers c 863, fol 56.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Macadam, 26 April 1945, Curtis Papers 98, fols 73-4.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of RT Meeting, 30 July 1945, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> The most important meeting appears to have been on 25 Sept 1945, attended by Curtis, Hailey, Hodson, Horsfall, Macadam, Malcolm, Maud and Morrah: Minutes, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>5</sup> Morrah to Altrincham, 8 Oct 1947, RT Papers c 784, fol 67.

"The ultimate ideal remains the union of nations in an organic Commonwealth . . . . Though 'ultimate' the ideal is not to be thought insubstantial or without effect on current policy . . . . Its adoption implies, first, that the opportunities of events must be seized to try to move towards the ideal, little by little, and that policies should be opposed which would tend in the long run to frustrate it. Secondly it implies that continuous and positive efforts should be made to create the general conditions in which the ideal could be brought to reality."<sup>1</sup>

The memorandum succeeded in what had become its primary purpose: that is, persuading Curtis to stay in the Moot. It was less successful in its other purpose: that of providing a basis for the revitalisation of the Dominion groups. The Melbourne group agreed that only the British Commonwealth "as a whole" could remain a world power; nevertheless, "the cooperative method . . . should be tried to the utmost as the most hopeful line of advance".<sup>2</sup> The Sydney group also declared itself in favour of "the continuance of the Commonwealth and its closer integration". But

"We do not subscribe to the view that organic union is possible . . . in any near period of time; nor . . . that it is possible at all without the achievement of vigorous statesmanship generally favourable to the Commonwealth ideal (and this statesmanship does not exist in the United Kingdom or Australia to-day)".<sup>3</sup>

The Toronto group failed to produce a collective reply, but when its secretary, H W Macdonnell, put the case for federalism at a meeting, "the only person who gave me much support was the one member of the gathering

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1 "Memorandum on Round Table Aims and Policy", Nov 1945, Curtis Papers 158, item 9.

2 "The Round Table (Melbourne Group): Reply to London Memorandum . . . ", 20 Dec 1946, Curtis Papers 98, fols 133-34.

3 "The Round Table Aims and Policy. Conclusions of the Sydney Group Formulated as at 1st October 1948", (Sydney file,) RT (O) Papers.

who was tight".<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most disappointing response was from New Zealand. There, von Haast continued to support Curtis's line, but "the majority would not even agree that the ultimate ideal of the Group or of the movement should be an organic and articulate union".<sup>2</sup>

With such views filtering in from the Dominions, Curtis's critics felt increasingly emboldened to challenge the lines of policy laid down in 1945. Matters came to a head towards the end of 1947, after Morrah published a leading article pointing out that "the Round Table has not receded from its belief in organic union as the ultimate ideal".<sup>3</sup>

Altrincham wrote a furious letter, denouncing federal union as "wrong and very dangerous".<sup>4</sup> Morrah suggested relaxing the rule of anonymity to allow the issue to be debated in the *Round Table*. While the Moot rejected the idea of signed articles, it was agreed that Altrincham and Curtis should put their respective views forward, to be followed by others from the Moot, the Dominion groups and elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> Thus the *Round Table* published articles by Curtis and Altrincham in March 1948, by Brand in June 1948 (followed by further contributions from Curtis and Brand in September), by Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe (on behalf of "United Europe") in September 1948, by the Melbourne and Sydney groups in March and September 1949, and by Max

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1 Macdonnell to Morrah, 8 April 1948, (Toronto file,) RT (O) Papers.

2 H F Von Haast to Curtis, 29 Aug 1946, Curtis Papers 98, fol 127. Von Haast later explained that recent recruits to the New Zealand group were "very narrow and anti Imperialistic in their attitude: Von Haast to Curtis, 13 March 1947, *ibid*, fol 143.

3 (Morrah,) "Heiress and Inheritance", *RT*, Sept 1947, pp 311-18.

4 Altrincham to Morrah, 7 Oct 1947, RT Papers c 784, fols 65-6.

5 Minutes of RT meeting, 29 Oct 1947, RT (O) Papers.

Beloff (with a further reply by Curtis) in June 1952.<sup>1</sup>

The Round Table debate of 1948-52 clearly indicated the breakdown of the compromise on federalism which had been negotiated in 1945, and which had in effect been in existence since 1917 or even earlier. It should again be emphasised that there was much common ground between the different protagonists. "Everyone is in favour of the end Lionel seeks", Brand asserted, in 1948.<sup>2</sup> All members of the Koot could agree on the necessity of maintaining, and if possible strengthening, the ties which bound the Empire/Commonwealth; all could agree on the importance of preserving the values for which they believed it stood.<sup>3</sup> The real question was whether federalism was a practicable way of achieving those ends. And here Curtis now found himself in a minority of one.

The reasons are to be found less in any developments in the Dominions themselves (although, as after the First World War, these were clearly important) than in the new context of international relations. Between 1945 and 1948 changes in that context transformed the situation of Britain

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<sup>1</sup> [Curtis,] "Untempered Mortar", *RT*, March 1948, pp 524-34; [Altrincham,] "Britain's Role in the World To-day", *ibid*, pp 535-44; [Brand,] "British Commonwealth and Western Union", *RT*, June 1948, pp 633-42; [Curtis and Brand,] "A Debate Continued", *RT*, Sept 1948, pp 749-61; [Maxwell-Fyfe,] "Next Steps for 'United Europe'", *ibid*, pp 742-48; [Melbourne Group,] "An Australian View of Empire", *RT*, March 1949, pp 111-17; [Sydney Group,] "Commonwealth and Common Policy", *RT*, Sept 1949, pp 317-22; [Beloff,] "Britain and European Federation", *RT*, June 1952, pp 211-18; [Curtis,] "The Real Issue", *ibid*, pp 219-23.

<sup>2</sup> Brand to Morrah, 8 March 1948, Brand Papers, box 171.

<sup>3</sup> [Morrah,] "Two Views of Empire: An Introduction to Debate", *RT*, March 1948, pp 519-23.



as well as of the Dominions, and undermined the assumptions on which the federation project had been built.

The dominating fact of postwar international relations was the "cold war": the unconcealed and barely contained hostility between Soviet Russia and "the West". Curtis was amongst those who moved most quickly towards outright hostility to the Soviet régime. In January 1946 he warned against "the danger of drifting into a policy of appeasement with Russia".<sup>1</sup> Much of the appeal of his postwar federalism was in its call to arms against the Soviet menace.<sup>2</sup> Others were initially more equivocal. As late as October 1947 Altrincham argued that the Commonwealth's rôle was "to stand between the two great federal blocs, the American and the Soviet".<sup>3</sup> By then, however, the "cold war" was an accepted fact. As Curtis wrote to Brand, Altrincham's policy "would . . . alienate almost every reader of *The Round Table*"; rejection of it was "one point on which I think we agree".<sup>4</sup>

It was not the fact of the "cold war" which divided Curtis from others in the Moot, but interpretation of its consequences. One of the most immediate effects of the "cold war" (if not, indeed, of the war itself) was to dispose of the notion that Britain could avoid implication in the security arrangements of western Europe. Despite its record in the 1920s and '30s, the Moot appears to have had no hesitation in accepting this conclusion. The case was overwhelming: Britain was now "intimately

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis to Morrah, 14 Jan 1946, Curtis Papers 98, fol 89.

<sup>2</sup> See, eg, von Haast to Curtis, 13 March 1947, Curtis Papers 89, fol 143.

<sup>3</sup> Altrincham to Morrah, 7 Oct 1947, RT Papers c 784, fols 65-66.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Brand, 15 Oct 1947, Curtis Papers 98, fol 161.

related to the European continent".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, very few members of the Root shared Curtis's enthusiasm even for the very limited proposals for European "union" associated with Churchill and Bevin.

Undoubtedly the most important consequence of the "cold war" both for Britain and for the Dominions was to re-emphasise their dependence on the United States. America's power was now "overwhelming".<sup>2</sup> The Anglo-American relationship was therefore bound to be unequal. But this in no way detracted from Round Table enthusiasm for it; indeed, the precariousness of Britain's position made it all the more urgent. As Hodson wrote in 1947, "we are undergoing the final death throes of the 19th century - that century in which British military and economic power dominated the world and enabled the United States to grow up in a kindergarten of her own".<sup>3</sup>

The echo of Kerr is suggestive. Was America now to return to her "kindergarten", as she had done after the First World War? Or would she accept the baton of world responsibility, as Kerr and Curtis had urged her to do a generation earlier? In the immediate aftermath of the war the answers to these questions were by no means clear, and the Round Tablers followed Canham's reports from the United States with undisguised anxiety. As late as December 1946 Brand thought that the forces pulling America in either direction were finely balanced.<sup>4</sup> Only after the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947 - itself a response to Britain's threatened withdrawal from Greece - was Canham sure that America would face up to her

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<sup>1</sup> [Morrah,] "Partnership and Policy", RT, Dec 1946, pp 3-7.

<sup>2</sup> Brand to Lippmann, 30 Dec 1946, Brand Papers, box 171.

<sup>3</sup> Hodson to Canham, 24 Feb 1947, (US file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> [Brand,] "Some Thoughts on the United States", RT, Dec 1946, pp 8-21.

"historic responsibilities".<sup>1</sup>

Curtis believed that the various changes in the international context wrought by the "cold war" had strengthened the case for federalism. But he realised that imperial federation by itself would now do little to meet the needs either of Britain or of the Dominions. He therefore advocated a federation of all democracies, Commonwealth, European and American. "You are certainly 'saying a mouthful'", Brand commented.<sup>2</sup>

Curtis's optimism regarding American opinion was undoubtedly the weakest point in his argument. Curtis frequently asserted that, once a start was made with some countries, the United States would be bound to join. Brand pointed out that probably the reverse was true: that if the United States did not join from the outset, which she was extremely unlikely to do, then certainly Canada and probably the other Dominions would stand apart, with the consequence that the Commonwealth would dissolve.<sup>3</sup> In Brand's view, Curtis's federalism - which, a few years before, he had regarded as merely impracticable - was now positively dangerous.<sup>4</sup>

#### Ireland: Neutrality and Secession

Throughout 1938-39, the possibility of Irish neutrality was a major preoccupation of Horgan's *Round Table* articles. In September 1939, possibility became reality. Horgan condemned de Valera's policy as both

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<sup>1</sup> [Canham,] "A Two-World Policy at Washington", *RT*, Sept 1947, pp 362-69.

<sup>2</sup> Brand to Curtis, 14 Oct 1947, Curtis Papers 98, fol 159.

<sup>3</sup> Brand to Curtis, 17 Oct 1947, Curtis Papers 98, fols 164-65.

<sup>4</sup> Brand to Morrah, 25 Aug 1949, Brand Papers, box 171.

unrealistic and hypocritical, claiming that the Taoiseach was fully aware that Eire's freedom depended on British protection.<sup>1</sup>

De Valera's insistence that partition was the greatest obstacle to Irish belligerency was put to the test in the summer of 1940, when the British Government resolved to enter negotiations, linking the two issues. Curtis, at Bevin's request, organised an All Souls group including Toynbee, Brierly and Adams, which drafted a scheme for an executive authority for the whole of Ireland, indirectly elected by the existing legislatures of Eire and Ulster, which would bring Ireland into the war, and form the basis of a more permanent post-war constitution.<sup>2</sup> The All Souls scheme provided a starting point for Britain's proposals, subsequently modified to cover only the British use of Irish ports. Nevertheless, de Valera rejected these overtures, probably because of scepticism concerning Britain's ability to deliver Ulster.<sup>3</sup> Horgan, possibly aware of the course of events, commented that "not even the abolition of partition would, failing German attack, induce us to enter the war".<sup>4</sup>

*Round Table* articles from Eire came to an end in December 1940, as a result of the Irish Government's restrictions on unofficial news. Horgan continued to send shorter articles via Northern Ireland until March 1942;

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<sup>1</sup> [Horgan,] "Neutral Ireland", *RT*, Dec 1939, pp 134-47. Curtis took a similar view and in subsequent years used "Irishry" as a synonym for irresponsibility: eg Curtis to Morrah, 17 June 1949, Brand Papers, box 171.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Bevin, 12 June 1940, enclosing "Memorandum on Ireland", Curtis Papers 90, fols 104-06.

<sup>3</sup> See Paul Canning, *British Policy towards Ireland, 1921-41* (Oxford, 1985) and Clive Ponting, *1940: Myth and Reality* (London, 1990), pp 189-94. Canning argues that Churchill scuttled the negotiations, whereas Ponting suggests that he was reluctant to intervene.

<sup>4</sup> [Horgan] "Divided Ireland", *RT*, Sept 1940, pp 864-78.



thereafter Mansergh and other writers attempted to keep *Round Table* readers in touch with events in the south. Mansergh recognised that Eire would carry less weight in the Commonwealth after the war.<sup>1</sup> More worrying was the effect of neutrality on Eire itself, where opinion was reported to have become distinctly isolationist and inward-looking.<sup>2</sup>

Horgan's articles were resumed in June 1946. His pleasure at Fianna Fail's defeat in the 1948 election was ill-concealed. Indeed, Horgan fully expected a new warmth in Anglo-Irish relations under Costello's coalition government, despite its inclusion of Republican representatives.<sup>3</sup> Costello's announcement of moves to repeal the External Relations Act therefore came as a shock.

"At a time when the preservation, not only of peace, but of freedom and civilization, depends on a firm alliance between the Atlantic States . . . Mr Costello's Government has embarked on a policy which makes it virtually impossible for us to participate in such a combination."<sup>4</sup>

It was with a mixture of sadness and anger that this self-styled "Nationalist of an older and more moderate school" greeted the final severance of Eire's troubled connection with the British Crown.<sup>5</sup>

It is by no means clear whether Horgan's *Round Table* contributions represented the views of the Moot. (Curiously, there was no editorial comment on Irish secession.) Mansergh wrote disparagingly of his articles in 1950, "rather as though our articles on France were written, if not by a

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<sup>1</sup> [Mansergh,] "Ireland", *RT*, Dec 1943, pp 66-68.

<sup>2</sup> [Mansergh,] "Ireland", *RT*, Sept 1943, pp 370-76.

<sup>3</sup> [Horgan,] "Ireland: New Policies and Facts", *RT*, Sept 1948, pp 787-92.

<sup>4</sup> [Horgan,] "Ireland and the Commonwealth", *RT*, Dec 1948, pp 44-49.

<sup>5</sup> [Horgan,] "'The Republic of Ireland'", *RT*, March 1949, pp 150-55.



legitimist, at least by an Orleanist".<sup>1</sup> However, this was at a time when it seemed that the Irish Republic was drawing closer to co-operation with the Commonwealth, and when the arguments of the past could only serve to hinder such developments. Horgan was in fact to continue as *Round Table* correspondent in Ireland until his death in 1967.

#### India: War and Independence

Inglis continued to send *Round Table* "chronicles" on India until 1942, when he returned to England. His successor as *The Times'* correspondent, James Holburn, acted as *Round Table* correspondent until 1946 (with occasional articles from Sir Francis Low, editor of *The Times of India*). Thereafter, the task of producing *Round Table* articles was shared between Geoffrey Tyson (a member of the Legislative Assembly and editor of *Capital*, the Calcutta financial weekly) and G A Johnson (assistant editor of the *Calcutta Statesman*). All these correspondents tended to endorse the broad lines of government policy in India, as did the Moot as a whole. Nevertheless, the two most effective influences on *Round Table* policy were now Coupland and Hodson, both of whom were to be found on the more progressive wing of British opinion on India.

Before the war, Hodson had argued that "in the long run, undoubtedly, the better course is to give India full self-government, since to prevent her from securing it might be [a] serious additional defensive burden".<sup>2</sup> The initial effect of the war was to strengthen Britain's reasons for remaining in India, at the same time as making repression easier.<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Mansergh to Morrah, 23 Jan 1950, Curtis Papers 98, fol 217.

<sup>2</sup> Hodson, "The Round Table", [c. 6 Jan 1939], Brand Papers, box 153.

<sup>3</sup> J Brown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope* (Yale 1989), pp 314 ff.

the longer term, however, the circumstances of the war reinforced Hodson's argument. The attempt to find some stable alternative to British rule therefore became a matter of increasing urgency.

The appointment of Amery to the India Office in May 1940 gave a boost to hopes of a successful wooing of Congress collaboration. Amery's idea, with which the Round Table sympathised, was to invite Indian leaders "during the war" to agree on a constitution to be implemented "after the war".<sup>1</sup> Amery's strategy almost immediately ran up against Churchill's "crude" conservatism, however, and the "August Offer" of 1940 was an emasculated version of Amery's original scheme.<sup>2</sup> As Hodson later wrote, "the general impression was one of taking as much with one hand as was given with the other. The note of boldness or imagination or generosity [was] wholly absent". This, Hodson added, was "not being wise after the event": at the time, as a member of the Empire Division of the Ministry of Information, he had pressed for a change in the wording of the "Offer".<sup>3</sup>

Amery frequently discussed the situation in India with his friends in All Souls and the Round Table.<sup>4</sup> After one such discussion with Curtis and others, in December 1940, he recorded in his diary that

"the practical upshot . . . was that nothing can be done at the moment . . . to end the deadlock, but that what is vital is that somebody should start the work of serious study so that when the

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<sup>1</sup> V R Louis, *In the Name of God, Go!* (New York, 1992), p 128: pp 123-79 are an illuminating account of Amery's tenure of the India Office.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp 128-136; cf G Rizvi, *Linlithgow and India* (London, 1978), pp 156-58.

<sup>3</sup> Hodson, *The Great Divide* (London, 1969), p 86.

<sup>4</sup> Amery also wrote one article for the *Round Table* ("New Proposals for Indian Settlement", Dec 1940, pp 101-15) and collaborated with Coupland on another ("India in the Post-War World", June 1941, pp 500-10).

atmosphere is better a real project can be produced which might form the basis of an agreement".<sup>1</sup>

Over the next few months such plans took a more definite form, with Coupland volunteering to conduct a study under Nuffield College auspices, and with Amery's appointment of Hodson as the Viceroy's Reforms Commissioner.<sup>2</sup> Hodson produced a memorandum on the steps needed to lead India to Dominion Status, which Amery welcomed as "evidently entirely fulfilling the objects with which I sent him out"; nevertheless, by the end of 1942 Hodson had returned to England, having failed "to consolidate his position with Linlithgow".<sup>3</sup>

Coupland's mission led to the publication of two volumes of history, *The Indian Problem, 1833-1935* (1942) and *Indian Politics, 1936-42* (1943), which have continued to exercise an important influence on the historiography of Anglo-Indian relations.<sup>4</sup> Coupland also published a third volume on *The Future of India* (1943). The latter attempted to square the circle of Indian constitutional advance by means of an elaborate scheme for a three-tiered structure of government, with intermediate federations of provinces (two predominantly Muslim and two mainly Hindu) grouped around river basins. Coupland's scheme was based on suggestions made by Maurice Yeatts, *Round Table* contributor between 1934 and 1937 and now Census

1 J Barnes and D Nicholson (eds) *The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries, 1929-45* (London, 1988), p 669 (entry of 15 Dec 1940).

2 *Ibid.*, pp 674-75 (Coupland 15 Feb 1941, Hodson 5 March 1941). Amery admitted that it "does look as if I were perpetrating the mutual jobbery which is sometimes charged against All Souls!" (5 March 1941, *ibid.*, p 675).

3 *Ibid.*, pp 740 (28 Oct 1941) and 846 (26 Nov 1942).

4 See eg G Rizvi, "The Transfer of Power in India: A 'Re-Statement' of an Alternative Approach", pp 127-44 of R F Holland and G Rizvi (eds), *Perspectives on Imperialism and Decolonization* (London, 1984).

Commissioner for India.<sup>1</sup> Coupland's scheme was well received in Britain, but widely condemned in India. Part of the reason was that Coupland himself was viewed with suspicion following the publication of his earlier volumes, which, as Edward Thompson reported, were frequently used by the Government to attack Congress.<sup>2</sup>

Coupland and Hodson were both well placed to observe the Cripps Mission of March-April 1942. Coupland was swiftly brought into the "Crippery" in Delhi, and his sympathies were strongly with the attempt to bring Congress into government. On the crucial sticking-point of the Mission, Coupland could not see "why . . . Winston and Amery worry overmuch" about the prospect of an Indian quasi-Cabinet. "We are going to abdicate in a few years. If Wavell [the Commander-in-Chief] is sure of his own position, what does it matter if the Indian leaders are in virtual control of domestic government?"<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Coupland laid the blame for the failure of the Mission squarely at Congress's door.<sup>4</sup> He attributed Congress's attitude to an "inferiority complex" and the fear that co-operation would weaken the independence movement. Hodson agreed, but he was also more inclined to blame Cripps's negotiating tactics, and in particular

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<sup>1</sup> See Yeatts to Coupland, 8 May 1943 and notes, Coupland Papers 5/2/69-99.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson to Coupland, 6 April [1943], *ibid.*, 5/3/70; British reviews, *ibid.*, 5/3/1-47; Indian reviews, *ibid.*, 5/3/204.

<sup>3</sup> Coupland, *Indian Diary*, 10 April 1942 (p 226), Coupland Papers, MSS Brit Emp s15.

<sup>4</sup> Coupland, "The Impracticability of Full Cabinet Government at Present", 12 April 1942, postscript to *Indian diary*, *loc cit*; Coupland, *Indian Politics, 1936-42* (Oxford, 1943), p 286. This view has been authoritatively rejected by R J Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939-45* (Oxford, 1979), pp 127-34.



his "easy promises" which subsequently had to be qualified.<sup>1</sup>

Following the failure of the Cripps Mission, the situation in India deteriorated rapidly. Holburn reported "a revolutionary outbreak which has no parallel since the Mutiny".<sup>2</sup> The responsibility for ending the deadlock was thought to lie primarily in Indian, and especially in Congress, hands. Britain itself was "only too ready" to leave India.<sup>3</sup>

The "growing inadequacy" of British power was acknowledged by Hodson in a *Round Table* article of March 1945. The "Quit India" disturbances had been "terrible", but also badly organised, ill-timed and half-hearted; and the Muslims, the Communists and the army had all remained aloof. Britain had always promised to hand over power only after an agreement had been reached which would prevent civil war.

"The argument is sound, but it is a question of degree; for Britain herself can give no absolute guarantee that in the future those catastrophes will not attend her own rule. The longer self-government for India is delayed the more likely it is that they will."<sup>4</sup>

It was clear, therefore, that a policy of trying to hold on to India was likely to be bloody, expensive and self-defeating. The question was, whether British objectives could still be met by conceding independence and renegotiating common aims.

The Round Table had long been involved in the business of reassessing British interests. With the sharp decline in Britain's economic stake in

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<sup>1</sup> Coupland, *Indian Diary*, 9 April 1942 (p 224), *loc cit*; "Appendix 1: Letter from Mr Hodson, 8th May 1942", *ibid*, pp 244-50.

<sup>2</sup> [Holburn,] "India: Government and Congress", *RT*, Dec 1942, pp 53-63.

<sup>3</sup> [Holburn,] "India: Lord Linlithgow's Reign in Restrospect", *RT*, Dec 1943, pp 52-58.

<sup>4</sup> [Hodson,] "Britain's Opportunity in India", *RT*, March 1945, pp 122-29.



India, those interests boiled down to the creation of a stable political and strategic partner. India was, as Amery put it with only slight exaggeration, "possibly [i.e. potentially] the greatest power in Asia".<sup>1</sup> That India's own interests compelled her to remain a member of the Commonwealth was frequently asserted in the *Round Table's* wartime Indian commentaries, as in Coupland's Nuffield volumes. Various reasons were adduced for this view: India's need for industrial expertise and finance, the stabilising influence of association with more experienced democracies, the continuing loyalty of the Princes and of large sections of the population, and, above all, India's need for some defensive association in a world increasingly dominated by large, expansionist Powers.<sup>2</sup>

Like the British Government, the *Round Table* was slow to accept the inevitability of Pakistan, which it regarded primarily as a bargaining-counter, and as likely to reproduce in more virulent and intractable form the problem of minorities. Instead, Hodson suggested that an all-India government be given powers over foreign policy, defence and communications; and that sovereignty in all other matters be devolved to the provinces, which could then decide what powers to transfer either to regional authorities or to the central government.<sup>3</sup> Similar ideas formed the basis of the Cabinet Mission's proposals in 1946, which Hodson welcomed as "statesmanlike" and "infinitely flexible".<sup>4</sup> Even after Pakistan was an accomplished fact, the *Round Table* cast doubt on its viability, and

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<sup>1</sup> Amery to Coupland, 27 July 1943, Coupland Papers 5/2/32-33.

<sup>2</sup> See, *inter alia*, [Coupland,] "India in the Post-war World", *RT*, June 1941, pp 500-10.

<sup>3</sup> [Hodson,] "India's Fatal Hour", *RT*, March 1946, pp 153-58.

<sup>4</sup> [Hodson,] "India's Task", *RT*, Sept 1946, pp 340-48.

regarded as inevitable its unification with India.<sup>1</sup>

The nearest that the Round Table came to opposing the Labour Government's Indian policy was in February 1947, with the announcement of a time-limit to the British presence in India. In a rare comment on the Indian situation, Hailey attacked the Government's policy, declaring it precipitate and injurious to British prestige.<sup>2</sup> Macadam circulated an even more virulent attack by John Coatman, the former *Round Table* contributor. Even at this stage, Coatman believed it possible for Britain to retain control of central government in India, and thus hold out for better terms.<sup>3</sup> Hodson (writing in the *Round Table*) was less convinced.

"If British will and British resources were still matched to the task, another decade of British rule . . . might well leave a more united, peaceable and prosperous India than is likely to emerge after ten years of independence. But neither the will nor the resources are to-day so matched."

The fundamental reason for Britain's withdrawal was thus clear.

Nevertheless, Hodson was able to put a more positive gloss on Britain's retreat. Indeed, the constitutional transfer of power was a remarkable achievement, and the culmination of decades of British policy.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Middle East: Expansion and Contraction

Britain's "self-interest" in the Middle East was, in the *Round Table*'s view, quite modest: the security of communications, bases and oil supplies, and the exclusion of other military Powers (including France).

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<sup>1</sup> [Hodson,] "Valediction to India", *RT*, Sept 1947, pp 330-38.

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard (Lords)*, 5th Series, Vol CXLV (20 Feb 1947), cols 1029-36.

<sup>3</sup> Macadam, "For circulation to the editorial committee", 14 March 1947, Brand Papers, box 171.

<sup>4</sup> [Hodson,] "Valediction to India", *RT*, Sept 1947, pp 330-38.

For the rest, "Britain can supply persuasion, and advice when it is desired, but 'benevolent despotism' is out of the question".<sup>1</sup>

The *Round Table's* hopes for a new era in Anglo-Arab relations after 1945 were shared by Labour's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin.<sup>2</sup> That such hopes were swiftly disappointed was the result of two factors. The first was that none of the Arab states, least of all Egypt, perceived Britain's demands to be so modest. The second was the corrosive issue of Palestine. The first of these factors was largely ignored; the second was the subject of increasingly anguished comment and analysis.

During the late 1930s, the *Round Table*, under the influence of Coupland, had briefly supported the proposals of the Peel Commission for the partition of Palestine. After 1945, under the influence of Altrincham and Nevill Barbour (a trenchant critic of Zionism), such a policy was decisively rejected.<sup>3</sup> Revulsion towards Zionist terrorism was undoubtedly an important factor; so too was the belief that a small Jewish state would be economically and militarily vulnerable, and likely to lead to the displacement of larger numbers of Middle Eastern Jews than it could itself absorb. Above all, there was the wider context of Anglo-Arab relations, and the fact that Arab (and indeed Asian) opinion regarded Palestine as a

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<sup>1</sup> [Harold Beeley,] "The Empire and the Arab East", *RT*, March 1945, pp 137-42. Altrincham put similar conclusions to the Colonial Office in September 1945: V R Louis, *Imperialism at Bay* (Oxford, 1977), pp 49-52.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary* (London, 1983), p 113 and *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> See Barbour's *Nisi Dominus: A Study of the Palestine Controversy* (London, 1948). For Barbour's influence, see Morrah to Curtis, 23 April 1952, *RT Papers* c 865, fol 148.

test of Britain's goodwill.<sup>1</sup> In Altrincham's view, not even American support for Zionism could weigh against such considerations: "the Empire cannot afford to allow its relations with the Arab world to be seriously prejudiced by any other . . . interest".<sup>2</sup>

The *Round Table* supported the creation of "a democratic State of Palestine, with an Arab majority", as part of a wider federation encompassing Trans-jordan, Syria and the Lebanon. The Zionists should be left to "make the best terms they could".<sup>3</sup> Caroe continued to advocate such a solution even after the announcement of Britain's intention to resign the Mandate, and the United Nations' vote in favour of partition.<sup>4</sup>

The manner of Britain's departure from Palestine was to many observers ignominious. To Barbour it was "the only honourable course", given that it was impossible to fulfil Britain's pledges to both the Arab and the Zionist communities. In his view, indeed, Britain's action would win her "the friendship of the Middle East as a whole".<sup>5</sup>

### The Colonial Empire

By 1949, Britain had been forced to concede Dominion status to Ceylon and full independence to Burma; Malaya was in the grip of a costly guerilla war; and local politicians elsewhere were making significant inroads into

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<sup>1</sup> [Altrincham,] "Palestine: Confusion, Fear and Hope", *RT*, Sept 1946, pp 313-22; [Caroe,] "Palestine in Asia", *RT*, June 1948, pp 643-48.

<sup>2</sup> [Altrincham,] "The Empire and the Middle East", *RT*, Dec 1945, pp 26-34.

<sup>3</sup> [Barbour,] "Resigning the Mandate", *RT*, Dec 1947, pp 448-54.

<sup>4</sup> [Caroe,] "Palestine in Asia", *RT*, June 1948, pp 643-48.

<sup>5</sup> [Barbour,] "Resigning the Mandate", *RT*, Dec 1947, pp 448-54.

British power. The Empire, surely, was in terminal decline.

This was not how it appeared to the Round Tablers. The latter had long regarded Britain's Asian colonies, and especially India, as being in a class apart from those in Africa and the Caribbean. All were in the same constitutional "procession", but "great distances separate the van from the rear".<sup>1</sup> There was little reason to expect an immediate "knock-on" effect. Indeed, Britain's Asian decolonisation was cited as a warning against the too-hasty concession of political structures which could then be turned against British rule.<sup>2</sup>

Far from being characterised by defeatism, the Round Tablers' attitude to empire in Africa and the Caribbean underwent a revival during and immediately after the war.<sup>3</sup> In this they were led by Lord Hailey, whose *African Survey* had rapidly become a "bible" in Colonial Office circles.<sup>4</sup> John Cell has pointed out that Hailey's ascendancy at the Colonial Office was relatively short-lived.<sup>5</sup> His influence over the Round Table was more lasting. He wrote at least one *Round Table* article himself, and arranged authors for others. Differences of emphasis opened up in the late 1940s, especially between Hailey and Curtis, but on the whole the

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<sup>1</sup> [Hailey,] "The Future of the Colonies", *RT*, Dec 1942, p 9.

<sup>2</sup> See, eg, Hailey's speech in *Hansard (Lords)*, 5th Series, Vol CXXXIV (20 Dec 1944), cols 465-71.

<sup>3</sup> As was the case in Britain generally: see J A Gallagher, *The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> A H M Kirk-Greene, Introduction to Hailey, *Native Administration and Political Development in British Tropical Africa* (Liechtenstein, 1979), p viii.

<sup>5</sup> J V Cell, *Hailey* (Cambridge, 1992), p 295.



latter acknowledged Hailey's authority on colonial questions.<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, Brand and Grigg appear to have held views very similar to Hailey's. The *Round Table* magazine was certainly consistent in putting forward such views.

Hailey himself stressed that his colonial philosophy was not an attack on British policy, but an extrapolation of it. He was "surprised to discover" the strength of popular feeling "that there is something inherently wrong - if not indeed discreditable - in the possession of Colonies".<sup>2</sup> He deplored the tendency "to overlook much that has been achieved", and he frequently highlighted the liberal-humanitarian continuities in British colonial thinking.<sup>3</sup>

As Roger Louis wrote, Hailey was "a godsend for the defence of the British Empire": an "Englishman who spoke to Americans with greatest authority and persuasiveness".<sup>4</sup> A large part of the reason was that he spoke in the right language: partnership, progress to self-government, welfare and development. Hailey emphasised the latter in particular: the need for a "far more effective intervention on our part to promote [colonial] development".<sup>5</sup>

The new emphasis which Hailey and the *Round Table* placed on colonial

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<sup>1</sup> See, eg, Curtis to Morrah, 17 June 1949, Brand Papers, box 171.

<sup>2</sup> [Hailey,] "Future of the Colonies", *RT*, Dec 1942, pp 8-16. The *Round Table*'s solution was a massive increase in Imperial "education", from primary school upwards, as outlined in three articles by F B Malin entitled "Education in Empire": *RT*, Sept 1942, June 1943 and Dec 1944.

<sup>3</sup> Hailey, *Britain and her Dependencies* (London, 1943), p 8.

<sup>4</sup> W R Louis, *Imperialism at Bay* (Oxford, 1977), pp 12, 10.

<sup>5</sup> [Hailey,], "Future of the Colonies", *RT*, Dec 1942, p 12.

development was an undoubted advance. (It was also of potentially great advantage to Britain itself, by facilitating the supply of dollar-free primary products; but this was a point which the *Round Table* was keen to play down.<sup>1</sup>) There was a corollary, however: "that political advance will be an illusion, and may be a danger, unless it rests on a firmer foundation of economic and social achievement".<sup>2</sup> In effect, Hailey had identified a new obstacle to colonial self-government: economic backwardness. Especially was this the case as financial self-sufficiency was deemed to be an indispensable condition of self-government.<sup>3</sup>

Another aspect of Hailey's philosophy which deserves emphasis is his opposition to the idea of internationalising the supervision, and especially the administration, of the colonies. This was an issue on which a number of Round Tablers felt strongly, as they had done in similar circumstances at the end of the First World War.<sup>4</sup> Again, the main danger was believed to come from America. The new emphasis on colonial development in British policy was thought to provide a convincing argument against such a possibility. Indeed, the 1940 Welfare and Development Act

"had for the first time envisaged the Colonies as an integral part of the Commonwealth; and the guiding principle of policy was now to be found in our determination to equip them to take their part as members of that society of free and advanced peoples".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "A Hundred Millions for the Colonies", *RT*, Sept 1947, pp 356-61.

<sup>2</sup> Hailey, *World Thought on the Colonial Question* (Johannesburg, 1946), p 8.

<sup>3</sup> "Self-government is not self-government if someone else pays all the bills": [G N N Nunn,] "Federation in the British Caribbean", *RT*, June 1949, pp 234-39.

<sup>4</sup> See, eg, Malcolm to Macadam, 20 May 1942, *RT Papers* c 862, fol 54.

<sup>5</sup> "The International Interest in Colonies", *RT*, Dec 1944, pp 24-30.

The Round Table was satisfied that the trusteeship scheme eventually adopted by the United Nations would prove no more than a minor inconvenience to British colonial administration.<sup>1</sup>

On the central question of colonial political development, Hailey and the Round Table deserve credit for the pressure they applied for an acceleration of the process of indigenising colonial administrative services.<sup>2</sup> Here again, however, there was a corollary: that the insufficient extent of such indigenisation was an obstacle to constitutional advance.<sup>3</sup> The Round Tablers also envisaged a protracted period of constitution-making, grouping colonies into regional federations, before some important aspects of self-government could be transferred.<sup>4</sup>

Hailey further muddled the waters of colonial political development by casting doubt upon the appropriateness of the Westminster model in non-European (not just settler and "plural") societies. This was the main issue on which he and Curtis clashed. As Curtis wrote, "I rather feel that when [Hailey] talks of self-government for tropical Africa he means something rather different from what I mean".<sup>5</sup> Hailey's ambivalence towards the Westminster model was closely tied up with his fear of premature political concessions: "it would be a misfortune if . . . the present few abdicated in favour of another group of very few less likely

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<sup>1</sup> "The Trusteeship System", *RT*, March 1946, pp 127-32.

<sup>2</sup> [Sir C Jeffries,] "A Service in Transition", *RT*, Sept 1946, pp 356-58.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*; Hailey, "Post-War Changes in Africa", *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, vol CIII (1955), pp 579-90.

<sup>4</sup> Hailey, *World Thought on the Colonial Question* (Johannesburg, 1946).

<sup>5</sup> Curtis to Maj L Hastings, 9 April 1947, Hailey Papers, Rhodes House, MSS Brit Emp s343.

than themselves to advance the interests of the many".<sup>1</sup> Instead, Hailey breathed new life into "indirect rule" as the basis for a more complex and therefore more protracted constitutional experiment.<sup>2</sup> On this point the *Round Table* followed his lead rather than Curtis's, suggesting in 1949 "that the pace of political development in West Africa is altogether too fast for stability or real democratic progress".<sup>3</sup>

While Britain's colonial rule suffered a number of setbacks during and immediately after the Second World War, the Round Tablers clearly did not regard those setbacks as indicating a process over which Britain had lost control. In Asia Britain still retained a foothold. In Africa and the Caribbean the colonial Empire had weathered the storm relatively well. At the very least, there was still room for manoeuvre.

#### Crown and Citizenship

The Statute of Westminster left certain elements of Commonwealth constitutional unity intact: namely, common allegiance to the Crown and (partly as a consequence) an underlying common citizenship. Both came under attack in the late 1940s: the first as a result of India's desire for a republican constitution, the second as a result of legislation introduced by Britain and the "white" Dominions.

Despite "a certain formal illogic" in the local privileges and obligations pertaining to British subjecthood, the *Round Table* believed

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<sup>1</sup> Hailey, *Britain and her Dependencies* (London, 1943), p 44.

<sup>2</sup> Hailey, *Native Administration* (Liechtenstein, 1979 edn), *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> [Lord Kilverton,] "Indirect Rule in West Africa", *RT*, March 1949, pp 125-30.

that the system "had, and has, great advantages".

"It enabled citizens of different parts of the Commonwealth to intermarry without problems of losing or changing nationality . . . . It fostered the growth and work of unofficial all-Commonwealth association . . . . It made possible official and military collaboration. It opened the door of opportunity in the public services of the United Kingdom - civil, diplomatic, colonial, military - and in the professions, too . . . . It was of great importance in the working of the diplomatic and consular system abroad."

Canada first called into question the continuing existence of this system, by its legislation defining Canadian citizenship, passed in 1946. But it was Britain which delivered a "fatal injury" to the system, by its passage of the British Nationality Act in 1948.<sup>1</sup> Because of the hurried manner in which the British government introduced this legislation the *Round Table* could do no more than protest at a fait accompli. Nevertheless, it was difficult not to draw the conclusion that in the eyes of British politicians "the effectiveness of the British Commonwealth as a corporate association . . . is not so supreme an interest".<sup>2</sup>

The debate on the position of the Crown raised equally fundamental issues, although in this case the arguments for retaining the existing system had to be weighed against the more serious consequences of inflexibility.

The speed of Britain's withdrawal from India had the one advantage that it allowed the creation of successor states by an amendment of the 1935 Act, rather than by waiting for new constitutions to be agreed. Temporarily at least, India and Pakistan accepted Dominion status within the Commonwealth. Their right to decide whether or not to continue this

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1 [Hodson,] "The British Subject", *RT*, June 1948, pp 655-63.

2 [Morrah,] "Half a Conference", *RT*, Sept 1948, pp 731-35.



Arrangement was not disputed.<sup>1</sup>

India's desire for a republican form of government seemed to many observers to provide an insurmountable obstacle to Commonwealth membership. Lord Altrincham declared himself unequivocally in favour of "consolidating our system in its present form", rather than "exploring the terra incognita of a Crownless Commonwealth".<sup>2</sup> Hodson later recalled that this was also the view of some other "older members".<sup>3</sup> It was not the view of the younger members, nor of the *Round Table* magazine. Indeed, the *Round Table* was keen to point out the enormous advantages of Indian membership of the Commonwealth - both to India itself and to the other members.<sup>4</sup> In an influential article published in *International Affairs*, Mansergh argued that Eire's status after 1937 provided a precedent for India.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Hodson emphasised the "pragmatic" nature of the Commonwealth, and he suggested that in some circumstances "the existing recognised symbolism may ... actually work against the cohesion of the Commonwealth".<sup>6</sup>

The acceptance of republican India's continued membership of the Commonwealth, by the "practical, indeed traditional, resource of saying in

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1 [G A Johnson,] "India: Division of the Indian Empire", *RT*, Sept 1947, pp 370-77.

2 [Altrincham,] "Episodes of the Month", *National Review*, Vol CXXXII (Jan 1949), pp 3-7.

3 Hodson, "The Round Table, 1910-1981", *RT*, Oct 1981, p 327. It is likely that Hodson was here referring to Malcolm and Brand.

4 See, eg, [Geoffrey Tyson,] "India: An Enigmatic Future", *RT*, June 1948, pp 690-95.

5 Mansergh, "Implications of Eire's Relationship with the British Commonwealth of Nations", *IA*, Vol 24 (Jan 1948), pp 1-8.

6 [Hodson,] "The British Subject", *RT*, June 1948, p 656.

effect that no crisis exists", was welcomed by the *Round Table*.<sup>1</sup> Mansergh later observed that the "period of self-destructive rigidity on this issue" had been ended none too early; and that an earlier decision might have saved Burma and Ireland for the Commonwealth.<sup>2</sup> Although this might have been in the minds of some members in 1949, Morrah provided a convincing reason otherwise, at least in the case of Ireland: "for there the republic has been set up for the sake of separation from the United Kingdom, rather than separation endured for the sake of the republic".<sup>3</sup>

The London Declaration made a special case for India; but it is unlikely that the Round Tablers believed that such a distinction could be maintained. Nevertheless, the only real cause of worry at the time was South Africa. The secretary of the South African group interpreted the Declaration as giving Malan the "opportunity of having one's cake and eating it".<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, as Morrah argued, "the achievement of a South African republic outside the Commonwealth, following the model of Ireland, has not been made easier"; the effect of the London Declaration might therefore be "to split [Malan's] own party".<sup>5</sup>

The link between monarchy and Commonwealth was by no means broken. Indeed Morrah was keen to make the monarchy more of a Commonwealth, and less of a purely British, institution, suggesting at various times a peripatetic Court, a greater representation of Commonwealth citizens in the

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1 [Morrah,] "Crown Without Sceptre", *RT*, June 1949, pp 203-07.

2 Mansergh, *The Commonwealth Experience* (London, 1982 edn), Vol 2, p 160.

3 [Morrah,] "Crown Without Sceptre", p 205.

4 Kidd to Morrah, 2 May 1949, (SA file,), *RT* (O) Papers.

5 [Morrah,] "Crown Without Sceptre", pp 205-06.

royal entourage, and a Commonwealth (including Indian) rôle in the Coronation ceremonies.<sup>1</sup> Common allegiance clearly remained an important bond between Britain and the "old" Dominions. Even in those countries with republican constitutions, the Queen's rôle as Head of the Commonwealth remained a symbol of "the sense of belonging together", and one which could help to strengthen that sense.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, contributors to subsequent issues of the *Round Table* recognised fully the extent to which the decision of 1949, in conjunction with the earlier decision to admit Asian member-states, had transformed the nature of the Commonwealth.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 See Morrah's series of articles "The Coronation and the Commonwealth": *RT*, Sept 1952, Dec 1952, Sept 1953, Dec 1953.
- 2 [Hodson,] "The Future of the Commonwealth", *RT*, Sept 1956, p 221.
- 3 See, eg, [Sydney group,] "The Commonwealth: an Australian View", *RT*, Sept 1960, pp 351-53.

16. THE ROUND TABLE AND THE POSTWAR COMMONWEALTH, 1949-66

"Certainly we have got to have much better management than we now have of our public affairs, and a good deal of luck, to hold our place in the world".<sup>1</sup> Brand's comment of 1949 reflected the toll of a decade of setbacks to British power and prestige, and to the unity of the Empire/Commonwealth. Yet there was still room for manoeuvre, and it was still possible to think of Britain as a "world power".<sup>1</sup> By the 1960s, this was no longer so. Sometimes reluctantly, sometimes with an unseemly haste, successive British governments wound up Britain's extra-European commitments, and adjusted her diplomacy to the realities of her position. The process was uneven, and (even at a very late stage) amenable to temporary reversal; but the underlying trend was all one way. "Imperialism" was dead, and its erstwhile practitioners sometimes uncomfortably "prehistoric".<sup>2</sup>

How were the Round Tablers to respond to this trend? Clearly there was a range of responses in Britain as a whole, from "diehardism" through a graceful pragmatism to "anti-Imperialism". There were expressions of regret from some of the older Round Tablers; criticisms, also, of the management of Britain's decline. Nevertheless, the general attitude of the Moot was realistic and forward-looking. The Round Table owed its very existence to the apprehension that British power was a limited and declining commodity; but also to the belief that a relationship based on partnership was more valuable than one based on dependence. Necessarily,

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<sup>1</sup> Brand to J M A Ilott, 16 Dec 1949, Brand Papers, box 171.

<sup>2</sup> Hailey to Morrah, 5 March 1964, RT Papers c 868, fol 130.

the Round Tablers re-examined the parameters within which such a partnership could be made to work. Some of the older and (as now appeared) less realistic aspirations were laid to one side. The *ignis fatuus* of a Commonwealth "world-state" was, at last, decisively rejected<sup>1</sup>; even the notion of a common defence and foreign policy was discarded. Instead, the Round Table concentrated on the retention and development of those aspects of Commonwealth co-operation which were likely to survive: "the exploration and cultivation of relationships which are the more numerous and the more stable because of their very modesty".<sup>2</sup>

Some commentators (especially in Britain) doubted whether the progeny of Empire, the Commonwealth, had any relevance in the modern world. This was not a view which commended itself to the Moot. Indeed, to all the postwar Round Tablers the Commonwealth was a connection whose importance (to its members, and to the world) was far greater than that of a mere 'empty shell'.<sup>3</sup> Rooted in history, intimately connected with "British" political ideals, yet now extended to encompass a diversity of national cultures and traditions, the Commonwealth was still capable of enriching the lives of its member states in a way unique amongst international organisations.

#### The Moot and the Round Table Magazine

Curtis and Altrincham appear to have been unable to attend many meetings in

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<sup>1</sup> Except by Curtis, who continued to preach Western, Atlantic and Commonwealth federation until his death.

<sup>2</sup> "Empire to Commonwealth and Beyond", *RT*, Nov 1970, p 380.

<sup>3</sup> [John Holmes,] "Can the Commonwealth Survive?", *RT*, Dec 1963, p 12.



the early 1950s. (Both died in 1955.) On the other hand, Malcolm was a frequent attender until his death (also in 1955), as were Brand until 1963 and Horsfall until 1965. Hailey was still active until at least 1964, and Brooke until 1966. Macadam, Maud, Morrah and Mansergh continued to participate in Moot activities until the 1970s, Caroe and Marris until the early 1980s. At the time of writing, Hodson remains an active member of the Moot - sixty-four years after first joining it.

The Moot in the 1950s thus consisted of a small number of 'aboriginal' members, a larger number of interwar and wartime recruits, and the three members recruited in the late 1940s.<sup>1</sup> Only one member was added in the 1950s, the banker Sir Oliver (Lord) Franks. He joined the Moot in 1954, but appears not to have taken any active part after 1959. Sir Keith Hancock was invited to re-join in 1950, but apparently decided against doing so.

Formal meetings of the Moot took place less frequently after the Second World War than before: with the exception of special meetings, there were on average eight a year in the 1950s, compared to twelve or more before 1939. Nevertheless, these were well attended, and much business appears to have been conducted by informal personal contact and correspondence. It was still possible to say "that the Moot is not a committee, but rather a closely knit working group".<sup>2</sup>

The primary responsibility for what was published in the *Round Table* magazine was, of course, the editor's. The Moot continued to play an important rôle, however: discussing the choice of subjects, suggesting

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<sup>1</sup> Coupland appears not to have attended any meetings after the war; Harlow's membership lapsed in 1951.

<sup>2</sup> Harlow to Morrah, 20 July 1951 (Moot file,) RT (O) Papers.

authors, and in many cases agreeing the line to be taken on controversial subjects. "Differences of opinion were inevitable, but consensus was still sought, for the most part successfully."<sup>1</sup> The most notable feature of the earlier *Round Table* - that, unless otherwise stated, articles were published as representing the corporate view of the Moot - was, to a large extent, retained. This was one reason why the anonymity of articles was preserved; another was that this practice made it easier to obtain "really informed writing from the fountain-head".<sup>2</sup>

Individual members of the Moot continued to provide a significant (although significantly diminished) proportion of "policy" articles: some 32% of those identified between 1945 and 1966.<sup>3</sup> Morrah himself wrote for virtually every issue before 1965. Hodson contributed at least 19 articles between 1945 and 1966, and Caroe wrote at least 19 between 1948 and 1966 (and a substantial number of signed ones thereafter). Horsfall and Brand contributed articles on a wide variety of subjects. Altrincham wrote on the Middle East, Malcolm on Central Africa, Maud on Southern Africa. Brooke covered British politics between 1949 and 1951. Mansergh wrote occasionally on Commonwealth relations, Marris and Franks on financial and economic questions.

Most of the articles published in the first part of the *Round Table* were now commissioned from individuals outside the Moot. Despite a

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<sup>1</sup> E V Hodson to author, 2 Sept 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Caroe to Col H N (Bunny) Head, nd [Sept 1957] (Dormant file,) RT (Q) Papers. *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* adhered also to this practice until the 1950s.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix D, "Round Table Articles, by Author".

relatively low rate of remuneration', the *Round Table* attracted many able and well-informed writers. To the extent that the Moot can be said to have had a preference for a particular type of writer, that preference was still for officials and administrators (either current or former). Amongst the many who wrote for the magazine in the 1950s were Lords Birdwood, Gladwyn, Hilverton and Twining, Sir Evelyn Baring, Sir Alexander Cadogan, Malcolm MacDonald and Romney Sedgwick. Chatham House was undoubtedly an important source of contacts: Macadam was Director-General until 1955, and Morrah himself was "at the hub of things" there.<sup>2</sup>

Politicians constituted a rather smaller group of *Round Table* contributors. Lord Alport, Joe Grimond and the Labour peer Lord Listowel were among the few invited to write in the 1950s. Academics and journalists were better represented: amongst the former Elizabeth Munro, Max Beloff and Isaac Deutscher, amongst the latter Edward Hodgkin, D H McLachlan and Oliver Woods. All Souls was still an important connection: Geoffrey Hudson, J E S Fawcett and Professor Hanbury were amongst those who wrote for what Morrah called "the College quarterly organ".<sup>3</sup>

The responsibility for providing quarterly "chronicles" was still in the hands of the local *Round Table* groups in the "old" Dominions. (The group in Newfoundland contributed articles in March and December 1948.) Under the unwritten "constitution of the *Round Table*", these groups enjoyed 'a sort of "dominion status"', which Morrah interpreted as the right to

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<sup>1</sup> "Wildly out of line" with payments even in "the most genteel, high-minded, prestigious American market": F W Collins to Morrah, 17 Oct 1963 (US File,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Macadam to Mrs Pat Curtis, 28 Jan 1960, RT Papers c 867, fol 59.

<sup>3</sup> Morrah to Prof E E Evans-Pritchard, 27 June 1949 (Dormant file,) RT (O) Papers.

decide editorial policy on local issues.' Articles which did not represent the consensus view of these groups, or which were commissioned directly by London, were published with an editorial disclaimer.

Elsewhere, the *Round Table*'s arrangements were with individual writers. Ireland and the United States presented few problems. From the former, Morrah continued to send "rather provocative" articles<sup>2</sup> until his death in 1967. John E Sayers of *The Belfast Telegraph* ("about the only medium here which is trying to give a lead in 'healing the history and binding the wounds' of this divided community"<sup>3</sup>) contributed a regular section on Northern Irish affairs after 1948. In America, Canham arranged for William Stringer (also of the *Christian Science Monitor*) to succeed him from March 1956.<sup>4</sup> The Moot found it more difficult to obtain dispassionate authors for the UK article. A succession of writers was employed between the late 1940s and early 1960s: Colin Coote, S W Mason and G D Wood of *The Times*, Peter Utley (Morrah's son-in-law), and the Conservative MPs Julian Amery, Iain Macleod, Sir Edward Boyle, Peter Kirk and Thomas Iremonger. Surprisingly, it was the journalists rather than the politicians who were found to be most partisan.

After 1947, the *Round Table* published regular "chronicles" from both India and Pakistan. At first, these were still written by British expatriates: Geoffrey Tyson, G A Johnson and Neil McInnes (all professional

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<sup>1</sup> Morrah to C W M Gell, 12 Nov 1953 (SA file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Morrah to Sir David Lindsay Keir, 19 Jan 1948 (UK file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Sayers to Morrah, 12 Nov 1964 (1964-65 file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> At his own request, Stringer alternated with Frederic W Collins (a freelance journalist) from June 1961.

journalists) in India, and F M Innes and Peter Ensor (both ex-ICS, now businessmen) in Pakistan. Not until 1954 was the responsibility for these articles transferred to indigenous journalists. N Majumder provided articles from India until 1960, Eric da Costa thereafter. Osman Siddiqui sent articles from Pakistan until 1966. At first Morrah found these articles "a good deal more tendentious than we have been accustomed to"; but "that I think we must expect if we decide to go on employing aboriginal pens".<sup>1</sup>

The *Round Table's* coverage of the dependent Empire (other than India) had been very patchy before 1939. Morrah saw it as one of the tasks of his editorship to rectify this situation.<sup>2</sup> "Policy" articles on West Africa, the West Indies, Ceylon, Malaya, etc, constituted a significantly increased proportion of the *Round Table* after 1945; nevertheless, regular "chronicles" were ruled out because of considerations of space. An exception was made for Central and (briefly) East Africa. From 1954, the *Round Table* published six-monthly articles by Garfield Todd, D I X Williams and John Spicer on Central Africa, and by Anthony Low on East Africa. Here the Moot was less inclined to employ "aboriginal pens".

When the *Round Table* was first published in 1910, it was a virtually unique source of information on different aspects of Empire politics. After 1945 this was no longer the case. There were now several other journals specialising in Commonwealth affairs (such as *The Commonwealth and Empire Review*, or London University's *Colonial Review*) as well as a host of academic journals on related subjects. Moreover, newspapers, radio and television were now able to provide a far broader coverage of international

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<sup>1</sup> Morrah to Hodson, 29 Nov 1954 (India file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Morrah to Brand, 2 April 1948, Brand Papers, box 171.



news, with none of the problems inherent in a publication which, as soon as it appeared, was "two to three months behind events".<sup>1</sup> In 1955 Hodson, with his wide experience in journalism, "raised the question whether it was possible for a quarterly to survive". Nevertheless, the Moot was understandably reluctant to close the *Round Table*: "the general feeling was that provided the magazine dealt with a sufficient number of fundamental issues of long-term interest there was still an important rôle for the journal to fill".<sup>2</sup>

Hodson had a point, however. The *Round Table*'s paid circulation, after reviving briefly in the late 1940s, declined from 2408 in 1950 to 1436 in 1960.<sup>3</sup> (The *Round Table*'s actual readership was much higher, of course: many subscribers were libraries, banks and companies with an interest in foreign affairs, government departments, officers' messes and the like.) The financial implications were disturbing. By 1960 the *Round Table* was making a trading loss of £2391 pa, rising to £4388 in 1965.<sup>4</sup> Bailey's £1000 pa came to an end in 1964. The *Round Table*'s investments now had to be sold off at an alarming rate. By 1965 the *Round Table* was leading for an unprecedented financial crisis.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H Kidd to Macadam, 14 Jan 1959 (SA file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of RT meeting, 14 Dec 1955, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes, 9 Dec 1959, and Report of the Council for 1960 (Annual Reports file,) RT (O) Papers. By now the US was the largest customer after the UK, closely followed by New Zealand (which took more copies than Canada, Australia and South Africa combined).

<sup>4</sup> Annual Reports for 1960 and 1965. (The 1965 figure included Beaton's salary as assistant editor, as well as Morrah's as editor.)

<sup>5</sup> Marris, "The *Round Table*: Investments and Financial Position" [1965] (Beaton file), RT (O) Papers.

### Defence and Foreign Policy

The last *Round Table* article to suggest a concerted defence policy for the Commonwealth was published in December 1950.<sup>1</sup> Even before then, however, the Moot had distanced itself from such ideas. Responding to Menzies' call for a Commonwealth committee on the lines of the CID, Morrah observed that "no special apparatus for achieving a united Commonwealth policy either existed or was demanded by member Governments". Nor was it likely that there was a need.<sup>2</sup> Local and specific collaboration was still possible, as when China threatened India, or Indonesia menaced Malaysia. But the idea of a Commonwealth defence system was now patently anachronistic.

The early Round Tablers had favoured Commonwealth integration partly in order to provide a framework for Britain's own defence. Now Britain clearly derived the bulk of this support from elsewhere. The American alliance was believed to be vital for British security. So, too, was an alliance with other nations in western Europe. The Dominions no longer looked primarily to Britain to supplement their own defence. In the case of Canada, this was implicit in the Ogdensburg agreements of 1940. In the case of the Pacific Dominions, the notion of a British-led defence system survived a little longer<sup>3</sup>, but finally succumbed under the impact of Mao Tse-tung and the Korean war. The ANZUS treaty of 1952 passed almost without comment in the *Round Table*.

One Canadian contributor to the *Round Table* asserted that "the common

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<sup>1</sup> [Anthony Head,] "Manning the Defences", *RT*, Dec 1950, pp 44-51.

<sup>2</sup> [Morrah,] "The United Nations in Action", *RT*, Sept 1950, pp 299-303.

<sup>3</sup> See, eg, [Sawer,] "Australia: A Debate on Foreign Policy", *RT*, Sept 1948, pp 808-13.

British assumption" was "that Canada and Australia have been seduced from their allegiance by the Americans".<sup>1</sup> This was not the case with the London Round Tablers, who were only too conscious that the "old" Dominions, like Britain itself, were merely asserting their own national interests in a world profoundly different to that which existed before 1939. In the new security systems created after 1945 Commonwealth membership was "simply irrelevant".<sup>2</sup> "We still seek to preserve world peace by concentrations of unchallengeable force", Morrah observed in 1960; "but the Commonwealth is not one of them".<sup>3</sup>

If Britain and the old Dominions afforded striking evidence of the redundancy of "Commonwealth unity in defence and foreign policy", the new Dominions provided conclusive proof. Nehru's policy of non-alignment (subsequently followed by Ceylon, Ghana and other Afro-Asian member-states) was the negation of the old conception of Commonwealth unity. The *Round Table's* Indian correspondent was often savage in his attacks on Nehru's policy.<sup>4</sup> The Moot was far more circumspect. Hodson merely suggested that, by keeping India in the Commonwealth, Nehru tacitly admitted "that complete national independence is an illusion".<sup>5</sup> On the whole, Hodson recalled, "there was no feeling that 'he who is not for us is against us'. India's non-alignment was regretted but her reasons were well understood".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Holmes,] "Can the Commonwealth Survive?", *RT*, Dec 1963, p 14.

<sup>2</sup> [Sydney group,] "The Commonwealth: An Australian View", *RT*, 9.60, p 355.

<sup>3</sup> [Morrah,] "The Commonwealth: A United Kingdom View", *ibid*, p 335.

<sup>4</sup> See, eg, [Majumder,] "The Foreign Policy of Mr Nehru", *RT*, Sept 1954, pp 363-68.

<sup>5</sup> [Hodson,] "The Future of the Commonwealth", *RT*, June 1956, p 220.

<sup>6</sup> Hodson to author, 2 Sept 1994.

The Commonwealth had thus "quite ceased to be a unit of power in the sense that Curtis postulated".<sup>1</sup> But if Curtis's vision was no longer relevant, other ideas of the early Round Tablers still were. In particular, Kerr's "larger idea" seemed more realistic now than when it was first enunciated. As Brand put it in 1946, "the problem of the British Commonwealth" was "more or less merged . . . in the problem of the English-speaking nations".<sup>2</sup>

In his inaugural lecture as Smuts Professor at Cambridge, Mansergh suggested that if "the United States is not within, equally it is not altogether without the contemporary Commonwealth".<sup>3</sup> Most overseas writers for the *Round Table* also assumed that the Commonwealth as a whole was intimately linked to the United States, as a result of Britain's "special relationship". The Canadian and Australian contributors to the September 1960 *Round Table* agreed that their Commonwealth links enhanced their countries' ability to "exert the proper suasion on American leadership".<sup>4</sup> Even the Indian contributor gave the Geneva Conference of 1954 as an example of the fact that, as a result of her links with Britain, India "could not be ignored by the United States".<sup>5</sup> The American contributor, for his part, saw the Commonwealth as "a bridge to the whole uncommitted world".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Morrah,] "The Commonwealth: A UK View", *RT*, Sept 1960, p 335.

<sup>2</sup> Brand to Lippmann, 30 Dec 1946, Brand Papers, box 171.

<sup>3</sup> Mansergh, *The Name and Nature of the Commonwealth* (Cambridge, 1954), p 28.

<sup>4</sup> [Brady,] "The Commonwealth: A Canadian View", *RT*, Sept 1960, p 343; cf [Sydney group,] "An Australian View", *ibid*, p 350.

<sup>5</sup> [Majumder,] "An Indian View", *ibid*, p 377.

<sup>6</sup> [Canham,] "A View from the United States", *ibid*, p 390.

To what extent, therefore, did the Round Tablers see the "special relationship" as a means of extending (or, at least, prolonging) Britain's global influence? Were they, like Macmillan, tempted to see Britain's rôle as playing Greece to America's Rome? The answers are by no means straightforward. Certainly, the most common image of America was still that of a "young" nation: naïve, but teachable. Britain, for her part, was "full of garnered knowledge", even if "overcome for a while with weariness".<sup>1</sup> But the Round Tablers were seldom tempted to over-estimate Britain's purchase on American policy, or to under-estimate the countervailing influences operating in Washington.<sup>2</sup> As one Canadian contributor wrote, America's policy was neither "invariably wise", nor always responsive to the interests of her coalition partners.<sup>3</sup>

The possibilities but also the limitations of the Anglo-American "special relationship" were perhaps best illustrated in the Middle East. In the early 1950s, this was one area where Britain could still claim to exercise a predominant Imperial power. The "cold war" reinforced the inclination to "hang on", in order to counter Soviet expansion and to retain a leverage on American policy. Both considerations "forced the policy makers . . . into much less flexible postures than they would have liked".<sup>4</sup>

On Egypt the Moot appears to have been divided. The *Round Table* carried contradictory articles: one by Julian Amery arguing for the

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<sup>1</sup> Caroe, *The Wells of Power* (London, 1951), p xviii.

<sup>2</sup> See here Hodson, *The Atlantic Future: Problems in Anglo-American Relations* (London, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> [Brady,] "A Canadian View", *RT*, Sept 1960, p 343.

<sup>4</sup> John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation* (London, 1988), p 145.



retention of Britain's presence, others by Sir Frederick Leith-Ross discounting the strategic importance of the Canal and describing Britain's position as "untenable".<sup>1</sup> But on the general question of Britain's strategic interests in the Middle East there appears to have been little disagreement. Curtis adopted what Brand called "a tough imperialist attitude" after visiting Cyprus: indeed, he thought that the reasons for holding on to Cyprus were "now twice as strong as when Disraeli bought the island".<sup>2</sup> Caroe also emphasised the strategic significance of the Middle East, although he concentrated on the oilfields of the Persian Gulf rather than on Egypt or Cyprus.

With Curtis's encouragement, Caroe worked up a *Round Table* article of March 1949 into a book, *The Wells of Power*, published in 1951.<sup>3</sup> This urged that "something . . . be put in the place of British power as exercised from India". His specific solution was for a "Northern Screen" extending from Pakistan to Turkey, supplied and guaranteed by the Commonwealth and the Atlantic Powers.<sup>4</sup> After the publication of his book Caroe

"went on a tour of the U.S. for the British Foreign Office . . . and had talks with State Department officials and others on these lines . . . I have more than once ventured to flatter myself that J F Dulles' phrase 'the Northern Tier' and his association of the U.S. with the 'Baghdad' countries

<sup>1</sup> [Amery,] "The Future of the Suez Canal Zone", *RT*, June 1953, pp 220-27; [Leith-Ross,] "The Egyptian Imbrolio", *RT*, March 1952, pp 113-25; [*idem*,] "Cross-Purposes in Egypt", *RT*, June 1954, pp 223-35.

<sup>2</sup> Brand to Macadam, 31 Jan 1952, Brand Papers, box 171; [Curtis,] "Review of the Survival of Political Man by Errol E Harris", nd [May 1952], *RT* Papers c 865, fols 154-57.

<sup>3</sup> Caroe's article was "The Persian Gulf: A Romance", pp 131-37; for Curtis, see Curtis to Sir Wm Haley, 27 Oct 1952, *RT* Papers c 865, fol 202.

<sup>4</sup> Caroe, *The Wells of Power* (London, 1951), pp 185 and *passim*.

in Asia were influenced by the thinking in *Wells of Power*.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless Caroe's influence was both limited and short-lived. His insistence that "the prerequisite of any effective policy" was an Anglo-American policy on Palestine "on lines which must commend themselves to Asiatic opinion"<sup>2</sup> fell on deaf ears. By the late 1950s American policy in the Middle East was "in an awful mess". The new emphasis on "an American M.E. policy 'free of entanglements'" Caroe found "both naïve and disconcerting".<sup>3</sup>

Caroe's experience thus underlined what was already known in the abstract: that America could not be relied on merely to underwrite British policies. The most striking illustration of this was, of course, the Suez crisis, when the United States showed an "apparently uncritical support for Nasser and his ambitions"<sup>4</sup>, and Britain and France were forced to beat an ignominious retreat.

#### Commonwealth Relations

The Suez crisis has rightly been seen as a pivotal episode in postwar British policy. It raised fundamental questions concerning Britain's capacity to act as an independent power, the nature of the Anglo-American relationship, the rôle of the United Nations, and the extent of Britain's commitment to the Commonwealth. The crisis divided the Moot, with the

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in C Hitchens, *Blood, Class and Nostalgia* (London, 1990), pp 289-90.

<sup>2</sup> Caroe, *The Wells of Power* (London, 1951), p 155.

<sup>3</sup> Caroe to Morrah, 19 Jan 1958 (Dormant file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> [Sir Geoffrey Furlonge,] "The Middle East Imbroglia", RT, June 1963, p 240.

result that "we had to hold three successive dinners . . . before we could get enough agreement . . . to make a leading article".<sup>1</sup> The latter took the patriotic view that the intervention was justified even if it was bungled; but it relied heavily on the government's claim that the aim was to separate the Israeli and Egyptian armies.<sup>2</sup>

India was especially critical of Britain's action - prompting some members of the Moot to question the value of her continuing Commonwealth membership.<sup>3</sup> Canada was also strongly critical, and not just because of the "very inadequate 'public relations' job" which the secretary of the Toronto group blamed.<sup>4</sup>

In its Commonwealth context, the Suez crisis raised an additional question: why it was that Britain failed to consult its partners. As Mansergh later emphasised, this failure "added to the sense of outrage".<sup>5</sup> Writing for the *Round Table*, Hodson suggested that Britain's partners might have read the signs. But on the whole he thought that Britain's failure to consult them - before acting "outside previously declared policies, in a way that intimately concerned their interests, and might have provoked war" - a lamentable example of a Commonwealth member "unwilling to fulfil the responsibilities of 'belonging together'".<sup>6</sup> Marris saw the episode as "a

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1 Morrah to J W Collins, 6 March 1957 (NZ file,) RT (O) Papers.

2 [Morrah,] "After the Cease-Fire", RT, Dec 1956, pp 3-7.

3 Caroe to Morrah, 28 Nov 1956 (ed ctee file,) RT (O) Papers. Indians themselves (including Rajagopalachari) put the same question.

4 Macdonnell to Morrah, 23 Jan 1957 (Toronto file,) RT (O) Papers.

5 Mansergh, *The Commonwealth Experience* (London, 1982 edn), Vol 2, p 171.

6 [Hodson,] "The Commonwealth and the Crisis", RT, March 1957, pp 114-20.

negation of all that the Round Table stood for, not necessarily because the policy of invading Egypt was wrong, but because the action was taken unilaterally".<sup>1</sup>

What is perhaps most surprising is the strength of this emphasis on consultation. The Commonwealth was no longer "a unit of power"; only some of its members shared a common foreign policy. Why, then, the need for consultation? And yet the need was felt. Clearly, therefore, the Commonwealth had a continuing function in the formulation of its members' foreign policies, which the Round Tablers and - to judge by their reactions to the Suez crisis - most of the member governments still thought to be important. But Suez inevitably had an impact on this aspect of Commonwealth relations. Before the crisis, it was still possible to talk of Commonwealth members "modifying our own several views by the process of discussing them . . . under the Commonwealth shelter".<sup>2</sup> After, it was possible only to speak of governments "know[ing] one another's minds".<sup>3</sup>

The Suez crisis had another effect, in Britain itself, and especially on the right of the Conservative Party: which was to embolden those critics of the Commonwealth who, having always seen it as an instrument of British policy, now derided it as a liability. In the late 1950s these critics were still relatively mute, but with the rapid broadening of the Commonwealth they constituted, by the early 1960s, a vocal chorus. The Round Table characterised them as "the racists, the narrow regionalists and single-minded believers in national sovereignty".<sup>4</sup> They were thought to

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<sup>1</sup> Harris to Macadam, 22 March 1958 (Sydney file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>2</sup> [Hodson,] "The Future of the Commonwealth", RT, June 1956, p 220.

<sup>3</sup> [Morrah,] "The Commonwealth: A UK View", RT, Sept 1960, p 338.

<sup>4</sup> [T Raison,] "The New Round Table", RT, July 1966, p 214.

be unrepresentative of the Conservative party, and certainly a small minority of the British people as a whole.<sup>1</sup> But the *Round Table* was the first to admit that they had a point. The Commonwealth was the outcome of a "resilient pragmatism"; it had to demonstrate its continuing value if it were to survive. "Is there anything which the Commonwealth does that cannot as well be done without it? . . . Has it still a meaning and is it still worthwhile?"<sup>2</sup>

In September 1960 the *Round Table* brought together answers to these questions from various parts of the Commonwealth, and from the United States. Most were realistic, unsentimental, yet also profoundly positive about the new Commonwealth which (as most acknowledged) had come into existence as a result of the decisions of 1947-49.

The *Round Table*'s Indian correspondent observed that Indians had now forgotten "the bitter memories, and remembered only the pleasant aspects, of their relations with Britain"; and that "the politically articulate sections of the people" were still "steeped in British ways of life and thought".<sup>3</sup> Morrah expanded the point. British rule - like the Roman Empire - had brought with it a "stock of possessions" which would continue "to fortify the nations of the Commonwealth": in particular, the English language and English common law.<sup>4</sup> Other writers cast their nets wider. A *Round Table* editorial of 1966 asserted that the Commonwealth existed partly

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<sup>1</sup> [T Raison,] "Is the Commonwealth a Farce?", *RT*, June 1964, pp 215-21; S C Leslie, "British Attitudes to the Commonwealth", *RT*, July 1973, pp 363-75.

<sup>2</sup> [Hodson,] "The Future of the Commonwealth", *RT*, June 1956, pp 218-19.

<sup>3</sup> [Majumder,] "The Commonwealth: An Indian View", *RT*, Sept 1960, pp 372, 376.

<sup>4</sup> [Morrah,] "A UK View", *ibid.* pp 339-40.



in order to foster "liberal, constitutional and democratic institutions" in its member-states.

"The political systems of these countries must increasingly adapt to the spirit and character of their peoples. But it is important that they should retain certain essential elements in the British tradition: the independence of the judiciary, the integrity of the public service, a high standard of business ethics and the freedom of the Press."<sup>1</sup>

This emphasis on the building-blocks of the "British" inheritance continued to inform a large part of subsequent Round Table discussion of the "meaning" of the Commonwealth.

The assumption that Britain had used its power in the past to promote "British" political values was, at the very least, open to question. But the assumption was not really essential to the argument: the postwar Commonwealth was, after all, a very different creature from the earlier Empire. A more serious criticism might be that the Round Tablers' views were a little fanciful in a Commonwealth which included Ayoub Khan's Pakistan or Nkrumah's Ghana - let alone one which was soon to contain a near-majority of dictatorships and one-party states. Indeed, the secretary of the Sydney group wrote in 1965 that "some members have questioned whether any content remains in the Commonwealth idea when it includes countries with the policy at present carried on by Ghana".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the revival of democratic values in the Commonwealth, in the 1980s and '90s, reflects well on the Round Table's tenacity.

The Round Tablers' emphasis on a common bedrock of liberal and (as they saw them) "British" values was one answer to the question: what is the meaning of the Commonwealth? But the Round Tablers also offered another

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<sup>1</sup> [T Raison,] "The New Round Table", RT, July 1966, p 212.

<sup>2</sup> MacCallum to Marris, 27 July 1965 (1964-65 file,) RT (O) Papers.

perhaps more in line with the realities of the contemporary Commonwealth. This was that "it is in the bridge concept that the principal worth of the new Commonwealth resides".<sup>1</sup>

The "bridge concept" applied at a non-governmental level: facilitating those "inter-relations of a cultural, professional and private kind" which Hodson described as "the grass-roots of the Commonwealth, little affected by the political mowing-machine".<sup>2</sup> The "bridge concept" also applied at an official level. If the Commonwealth had lost its value as a "unit of power", by the same token it had gained a valuable new rôle, as one of the few associations which enabled representatives of countries with very different policies to meet "not to agree but to seek to understand".<sup>3</sup> There was still much actual co-operation at an official level, on such matters as finance, trade, education and research. The Commonwealth also opened up many bilateral relationships. One weakness of the Commonwealth which the New Zealand contributor identified in 1960 was that in most cases the strongest ties were still with Britain.<sup>4</sup> But the London contribution welcomed the close ties between Canada and India as an example of what could be achieved, and expressed a hope that in the future "there will be a complete nexus, providing equally firm ties of each with each".<sup>5</sup>

The most important application of the "bridge concept", in Morrah's view, was one which was only made possible by the development of the "new"

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1 [Morrah,] "A UK View", *RT*, Sept 1960, p 338.

2 [Hodson,] "The Future of the Commonwealth", *RT*, June 1956, p 220.

3 [Holmes,] "Can the Commonwealth Survive?", *RT*, Dec 1963, p 15.

4 [Aikman,] "A New Zealand View", *RT*, Sept 1960, pp 362-63.

5 [Morrah,] "A UK View", *ibid*, pp 337-38.

### Commonwealth after 1947-49.

"The determining feature of the present Commonwealth, and its principal point of contrast with the Commonwealth of the past, is its multi-racial character. It is important to look at this as a positive foundation for the development of the future Commonwealth, and not as a dilution of its more concentrated integrity when under white hegemony."

A few of the older Round Tablers found it difficult to look on the multi-racial character of the Commonwealth as a "positive foundation". Brand, for instance, regarded the "old" Dominions as the only "real part of the Commonwealth which still exists".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, by the early 1960s most Round Tablers were at least realistic and often emphatically positive about the multi-racial character of the Commonwealth as a whole. (They were also positive about the increasingly multi-racial character of Britain.<sup>3</sup>) The contrast with a previous age was often striking. It would not have been possible for Kerr or Curtis, for instance, to have written that West Indians or Africans or Indians "have also a good deal to give to their fellow members of the Commonwealth"; or that "their cultures have riches which we are beginning to appreciate".<sup>4</sup>

### Decolonisation

"It is a most difficult thing to judge at what stage . . . a colonial power is to consider it justifiable to hand over authority", Hailey said in

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<sup>1</sup> [Morrah,] "A UK View", *RT*, Sept 1960, p 336.

<sup>2</sup> Brand to Hodson, 21 Aug 1962, Brand Papers, box 171.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, the three articles published under the title "Britain and Her Immigrants" in June [Sheila Patterson], September [Alfred Sherman] and December 1965 [Sir George Sinclair]. Sherman's was hostile to the new wave of immigration, but was accompanied by an editorial disclaimer. The other two were not.

<sup>4</sup> [T Raison,] "Is the Commonwealth a Farce?", *RT*, June 1964, p 221.

1955. But he gave it as his opinion that there was

"no other way than to apply the purely pragmatic test that when people really want it they will be able to show it so strongly that it is better to give it to them. Otherwise the whole course of administration is going to be too much of a burden, both to the government and the people".<sup>1</sup>

Hailey's judgment might almost be considered an epitome of expert and official British opinion in the age of decolonisation. Nevertheless, there were important exceptions to Hailey's rule of thumb, and it was only after the majority of colonies was firmly on the road to independence that the process was recognised as being "impossible to stop".<sup>2</sup>

The most plausible accounts of decolonisation emphasise the need for a "pluralist" explanation. Changes in Britain, the colonies, and the wider international context all need to be taken into account; and their interactions in particular circumstances offer the best hope of explaining both individual acts of decolonisation and the general process itself.<sup>3</sup>

Hailey's observations of 1955 indicate that he laid more stress on the metropolitan and colonial than the international aspects of the problem. This was also true of most contributors to the *Round Table* magazine. In the case of Malaya, the "cold war" clearly delayed the transfer of power. Those writers who saw the possibility of a similar Communist threat in Africa tended to emphasise the importance of preparing colonies more thoroughly for independence.<sup>4</sup> Other writers, such as Elspeth

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1 Hailey, "Post-War Changes in Africa", *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol CIII, no 4955 (8 July 1955), pp 579-90.

2 [Howick,] "Transition in Kenya", *FT*, June 1961, p 272.

3 A N Porter and A J Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonization, 1938-64: Vol 1* (London, 1987), pp 3-7; John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation* (London, 1988).

4 Eg, "The Cold War in the Tropics", *FT*, Dec 1960, pp 15-21.



Huxley, discounted the appeal of Communism.<sup>1</sup> The "cold war" was therefore regarded either as an unimportant factor in decolonisation, or as a reason for delaying the process - not as a reason for hastening it. American anti-colonialism was less of a worry, too. Morrah believed that it was on the wane.<sup>2</sup> Hailey reacted furiously when one article invoked it. "Since when have we come to welcome the US as a partner in the control of our dependencies?"<sup>3</sup>

Most of those associated with the *Round Table* thus saw decolonisation primarily as the outcome of the metropolitan-colonial relationship. Hailey thought that the two most important factors involved were Britain's reluctance to incur the financial and political costs of repression, and the inevitability of the growth of local nationalism. The first governed attitudes to the second, so that (Hailey implied) nationalists would effectively be knocking at an open door. Perhaps the classic example of this was the Gold Coast. Oliver Woods argued in the *Round Table* that the "all-pervading" support for Nkrumah's CPP made self-government unavoidable.<sup>4</sup> But most writers in the *Round Table* were unhappy with the simple formula of nationalist demands leading to metropolitan concessions, even if they recognised it to be basically true. A larger rôle was still envisaged for the metropolitan power. As Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Howick) put it, the government's aim should not be to gain "a perhaps transitory popularity with the more impatient and vocal . . . Nationalists", but to

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<sup>1</sup> [Huxley,] "The Ethos of Negro Africa", *RT*, Dec 1960, pp 7-14.

<sup>2</sup> [Morrah,] "The Commonwealth: A UK View", *RT*, Sept 1960, pp 336-37.

<sup>3</sup> Hailey to Morrah, 25 June [1962] (Rhodesias file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> [Woods,] "Self-Government in the Gold Coast", *RT*, Sept 1952, pp 326-32.



give "as good a chance as . . . possible . . . to a new and independent government to succeed".<sup>1</sup> What, then, were the conditions of success? Alternatively, what were the preconditions of British departure?

First it is necessary to draw a distinction between those colonies which contained a significant number of white settlers and those which did not. Central Africa clearly came into the first category. Kenya and Tanganyika were also conceived in the same terms until the late 1950s - both initially received "multi-racial" (ie weighted) constitutions. The *Round Table* had adopted an equivocal line on East Africa in the 1930s, torn between the settler and trusteeship ideals. The same was true in the 1950s. Elspeth Huxley argued that the British government was honour-bound not to give in to the "rising [African] racialist tide".<sup>2</sup> In the same issue, however, Anthony Low argued that "the years of multiracialism are already numbered", and that "concessions will be forced from the Government and the Europeans unless they make them gracefully".<sup>3</sup> Low reiterated his doubts in subsequent articles. The demise of "multi-racialism" in East Africa was therefore something for which *Round Table* readers should have been prepared.

The problem of co-existence between different ethnic groups was not confined to the areas of European settlement. It was perhaps at its most acute in Malaya. Sir Sidney Caine, writing in 1953, believed that Malaya would have to remain under British rule for "at least a generation", if "acute internal dissension" were to be avoided.<sup>4</sup> (Four years later, he

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1 [Howick,] "Transition in Kenya", *RT*, June 1961, pp 272-77.

2 [Huxley,] "Economic Man in East Africa", *RT*, Sept 1955, pp 323-33.

3 [Low,] "East Africa: The Royal Commission", *RT*, Sept 1955, pp 419-24.

4 [Caine,] "Malaya after the Emergency", *RT*, Sept 1953, pp 350-58.

was welcoming Malayan independence, albeit sceptically.) Inter-ethnic rivalry was again a recurrent theme of the *Round Table's* coverage of Africa. Elspeth Huxley asserted that "fitness for self-government presupposes a political unit which is, so to speak, self-governable". She went on to list examples of the way in which the "cartographer-countries" of Africa flew in the face of ethnic facts, and suggested a need for redrawing boundaries to create "viable political units" before further moves towards self-government.<sup>1</sup> Ethnic tensions were seen as one reason why Ghana and other countries descended into one-party rule so soon after independence.<sup>2</sup>

The need to create "viable political units" was believed to work also in the opposite direction, in favour of amalgamation or federation on a regional basis. This was, of course, believed to apply with special force to Central and East Africa. In the latter case, Howick argued for the maintenance of existing (High Commission) co-ordination even after the demise of "multi-racialism".<sup>3</sup> Another area where federation was believed to be an essential prerequisite to independence was the British Caribbean. In 1949 G N N Nunn listed the (mainly economic) reasons: the need for planning development, raising loans, redistributing population and encouraging agricultural diversity rather than inter-island competition.<sup>4</sup> The demise of the short-lived West Indian Federation was thought to leave a question-mark over the viability of many of the smaller

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1 [Huxley,] "African Independence and After", *RT*, Dec 1955, pp 17-26.

2 [Ali Mazrui,] "Constitutional Experiment in Africa", *RT*, June 1963, pp 241-49.

3 [Howick,] "Transition in Kenya", *RT*, June 1961, pp 272-77.

4 [Nunn,] "Federation in the British Caribbean", *RT*, June 1949, pp 234-39.

Islands.

One consideration which applied to all colonies approaching independence was the need to build up a cadre of indigenous administrators. The progress made in this direction in the Gold Coast was thought to be one reason why self-government was possible at such an early stage there.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere, progress was not so good. Hailey's main criticism "of the pace adopted by us" in Africa was that, unlike the comparable situation in India, "little or nothing has been done in the years gone past to prepare the African by experience of administration to take up the new powers that are being given to him".<sup>3</sup> Most writers thought that the newly-independent countries would have to rely on British or European expatriates for some time to come. In some cases (such as Nigeria) the generous pensions for administrators taking early retirement were criticised, on the grounds that more encouragement should be given to them to stay.<sup>4</sup>

The counterpart to administrative preparation was political preparation, and here again there were grounds for thinking that the pace of decolonisation was too fast. Hailey, after writing a memoir on Curtis and dyarchy in India, opined to Morrah that a similar "school for embryo ministers" would have been useful in Africa.<sup>5</sup> Hailey's doubts went further. As he earlier wrote to Curtis, in his heart of hearts he believed that parliamentary self-government was "not suited to oriental or African

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<sup>1</sup> [Lady Huggins,] "Failure of a Federation", *RT*, June 1962, pp 273-78.

<sup>2</sup> [Woods,] "A Nascent Dominion", *RT*, March 1955, pp 149-55.

<sup>3</sup> Hailey, "Post-War Changes in Africa", *loc cit.*

<sup>4</sup> [Sir Henry Willink,] "Nigeria: The African Giant", *RT*, Dec 1959, pp 55-63.

<sup>5</sup> Hailey to Morrah, 18 Sept 1960, *RT Papers* c 867, fols 73-74.

social conditions".<sup>1</sup> Most contributors were optimistic regarding the future of parliamentary institutions in Britain's ex-colonies.

Nevertheless, many shared Hailey's doubts about the pace of reform. As Elspeth Huxley wrote in 1955, parliamentary government was "as much a European invention as the internal combustion engine or the dynamo; and like these, it needs a certain grasp of technique . . . to make it work".<sup>2</sup>

Two questions might be put in conclusion. How did the Round Tablers view the process of decolonisation as a whole? And was the Round Table an influence on government policy? It is perhaps easier to answer the second question than the first. There is little evidence to suggest that contributors to the *Round Table* attempted to influence short-term policy. Most articles were retrospective comments on British moves: it was the government which set the agenda, and forced the pace. The Noot itself was more interested in the effects of newly-independent countries on the Commonwealth than in the processes which led to independence. In most cases it is not clear what the Noot's views were. But if the contributions of outside writers are taken as a guide, it is clear that attitudes to decolonisation were, at best, equivocal. Most writers recognised what Anthony Low described as the "Scylla and Charybdis" of British policy: the dangers of going too fast or of going too slow.<sup>3</sup> Many writers (but not Low) erred on the side of caution. "What is needed above all else is time", Elspeth Huxley wrote in 1955.<sup>4</sup> Yet time was in perilously short supply. Most writers therefore simply made the best of the circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> Hailey to Curtis, 17 April 1947, Hailey Papers, MSS Brit Emp s 343.

<sup>2</sup> [Huxley,] "African Independence and After", *loc cit.*

<sup>3</sup> [Low,] "East Africa", *RT*, March 1956, pp 202-08.

<sup>4</sup> [Huxley,] "Economic Man in East Africa", *RT*, Sept 1955, p 332.



South Africa

Historically, the Round Table was linked in a peculiar degree to South Africa. The older Round Tablers (Altrincham and Horsfall, as well as the "Kindergarten" members) always retained a sympathy for the position of the whites in Africa, and for the notion of a white cultural (and, in a few cases, racial) superiority. Yet the Round Table was also in the forefront of those extolling the Commonwealth as a "bridge" between races. The contradiction was always latent in Round Tablers' views. After 1948 - with a South African government wedded to discrimination not "as a phase" but "in perpetuity" - the contradiction had to be faced. Inevitably, different members responded in different ways. Even if all could agree in rejecting the policies of the Nationalist government, apartheid raised fundamental questions which were painful, discomfiting and divisive.

Curtis's response to the South African situation was idiosyncratic. Although no "racist" in the modern sense of the word - he came "to realise our own crime in treating the Native majority as helots", and protested strongly against the unofficial "colour bar" in his London club<sup>2</sup> - South Africa was still his blind spot. In 1947 and again in 1952 he argued for what was, in effect, total apartheid. The instrument of his proposal was the creation of a "Negro Dominion" (initially under international, including South African, control) north of the Zambezi, which would, in his view, exercise an "overpowering" attraction to the millions of black South

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<sup>1</sup> [Morrah,] "A Leaf Falls", RT, June 1961, pp 219-23.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to *Johannesburg Star*, reprinted in *Windows of Freedom and Other Papers* (Oxford, 1952), pp 39-42; Curtis to Philip Radcliffe (Oxford & Cambridge Club), 31 Aug 1955, RT Papers c 866, fol 195.



Africans, who would migrate north, and "the dream of a white South Africa would be realised".<sup>1</sup> Curtis had two main points: first, that South Africa should be allowed to expand to include South-West Africa, Southern Rhodesia and the Protectorates; and secondly that apartheid should be treated with sympathy, to the extent that regional policies should be governed by the attempt to make "white South Africa" a reality.

Curtis was alone in favouring South African absorption of Southern Rhodesia: most of the Moot supported the alternative policy of Central African Federation, partly as a counter-weight to "Afrikaner" domination to the south. The transfer of the Protectorates was no longer considered a serious proposition, either. Indeed, the *Round Table* now published articles by Romney Sedgwick, Sir Evelyn Baring and Maud, all arguing strongly against transfer and in favour of a more active British policy of development.<sup>2</sup>

On the second point Curtis clearly struck a chord amongst older Round Tablers, but on the question of solutions he was again largely isolated. In Brand's view, the determining factor was that

"black and white are inextricably mixed in South Africa. If the whites went, the blacks would sink back into barbarism; if the blacks went, the whole of the South African economy would be irretrievably ruined".<sup>3</sup>

Brand recognised that apartheid was a sham. Nevertheless, his opposition to racial discrimination was limited by his continuing belief in the

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, "South Africa's Future in the Commonwealth", *Listener*, Vol XXVII, (3 April 1947), pp 489-91; *Windows of Freedom*, loc cit.

<sup>2</sup> [Sedgwick,] "A Trust in Africa", *RT*, March 1950, pp 121-26; [Baring,] "The High Commission Territories", *RT*, March 1952, pp 141-51; [Maud,] "The High Commission Territories", *RT*, Dec 1963, pp 26-50. Baring was British High Commissioner in South Africa 1944-51, Maud 1959-63.

<sup>3</sup> Brand to Curtis, 3 April 1947, Curtis Papers 98, fol 145.

necessity of a gradualist, "Rhodesian" solution. In 1961 he deplored international condemnation of South Africa, reiterating his belief in a "northern European" antipathy to intermarriage, and asserting that democracy in South Africa was "totally impossible at present" because it would threaten the foundations of a "great commercial, industrial and financial state".<sup>1</sup> Horsfall held similar views, and in 1960 he contributed a *Round Table* article "to argue for a more sympathetic understanding of the complicated situations you [South Africans] have to face".<sup>2</sup>

Other members of the Moot were more perceptive in realising that the fundamental problem was not just the short-sightedness of the ruling Nationalist party, but the racial aspirations of the white electorate. Bailey - perhaps exceptionally amongst the older generation of Round Tablers - argued such a case after reading an article by Edgar Brookes on the erosion of civil liberties in South Africa.

"I accept the conclusion it draws, namely, that the maintenance of White supremacy must inevitably involve a régime which makes it impossible to maintain civil liberties . . . but I do not find that this conclusion shocks the White population here (British or Afrikaner) as much as it should do. It seems to me that most White people here are content to feel that if White supremacy cannot be retained without offence to the principle of Civil Liberty, then so much the worse for the principle."<sup>3</sup>

Bailey's attitude to apartheid was again different in that he understood clearly the international implications involved. Whereas Curtis, Brand and Horsfall all saw apartheid as a "South African problem" - and argued that

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<sup>1</sup> *Hansard (Lords)*, 5th series, Vol 229, (23 March 1961), cols 1259-62.

<sup>2</sup> Morrah to Kidd, 29 April 1960 (SA file,) RT (O) Papers; the article was "The South African Tragedy", RT, June 1960, pp 221-33.

<sup>3</sup> Bailey (from South Africa) to Hodson, 13 Oct 1959 (SA file,) RT (O) Papers.

criticism from Britain or elsewhere was inappropriate - Hailey realised that failure to criticise South African policies "will discount the estimation in which the Commonwealth is held and will certainly impair the influence it can exercise in world affairs".<sup>1</sup> This consideration - as well as opposition to the effects of apartheid in South Africa itself - weighed heavily also with the younger Round Tablers. Hodson, Maud and Mansergh were all committed to the extension of liberal-democratic values and to the vision of a multi-racial Commonwealth. Writing in the *Round Table*, Hodson made clear that there could only be one answer if the Nationalists forced Britain and her other partners "to choose between a uni-racial Commonwealth with South Africa as a member and a multi-racial Commonwealth without her".<sup>2</sup>

Morrah was concerned to handle the question of apartheid "with special editorial punctilio"; indeed, "the more we oppose apartheid the more careful we must be to do justice to its advocates".<sup>3</sup> This reasoning led the *Round Table* to publish a statement of the Nationalist view, approved and amended by Verwoerd after an interview by Brand and Erwin Schuller.<sup>4</sup> (The *Johannesburg Star* re-printed the article, with the comment that it had had to go "far afield" to find such a reasoned statement of the government's case.<sup>5</sup>) The Moot was also anxious to publish more radical

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1 Hailey, "African Colonies and the Crown", *Listener*, Vol XXIVII, (10 April 1947), pp 542-43.

2 [Hodson,] "Dr Malan and the Commonwealth", *RT*, June 1951, pp 219-26.

3 Morrah to Lord Gladwyn, 9 Dec 1964 and 11 Dec 1964 (1964-65 file,) RT (O) Papers.

4 [Schuller/Verwoerd,] "Apartheid in Practice", *RT*, June 1954, pp 259-63.

5 *Johannesburg Star*, 2 Aug 1954.

criticism of the government's policies than was obtained through the South African group. At the cost of friction with the latter, the London group obtained articles from Pat Duncan and C W M Gell, both of whom argued that only extra-parliamentary agitation would bring about the fall of the Nationalist government.<sup>1</sup>

The South African group included notable liberals in the form of Leo Marquand, Harry Lawrence and Edgar Brookes. But the majority of the group consisted of supporters of the United Party, including its leader, Sir J P de Villiers Graaff. The group found it difficult to conceive of an opposition to apartheid which was not constitutional (and therefore purely white). There was little attempt to cover what Pat Duncan described as "the vital political struggle . . . the acharné struggle for the soul of the rising African political movement".<sup>2</sup>

The South African group's UP connections also tended to colour its reporting of apartheid legislation. Marquand and Brookes contributed some hard-hitting articles, but the group often insisted on an editorial disclaimer. Other articles gave the impression of extenuating Nationalist policies. Generally, the majority of the group seemed to accept the UP belief that "any fast move in the direction of integrating the non-European peoples" would "alarm the White electorate", and was therefore a political impossibility.<sup>3</sup> As Duncan observed, "in stated policy [the UP] differs hardly at all from the Nationalists".<sup>4</sup> The younger members of the Koot

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<sup>1</sup> [Duncan,] "Satyagraha in South Africa", *RT*, March 1953, pp 130-37; [Gell,] "New Parties in South Africa", *RT*, Dec 1953, pp 48-56.

<sup>2</sup> Duncan to Morrah, 19 Nov 1952 (SA file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> "South Africa", *RT*, Dec 1959, pp 90-94.

<sup>4</sup> [Duncan,] "Satyagraha in South Africa", *RT*, March 1953, pp 130-37.



agreed. In 1954 Morrah reported them as being "disappointed that the United Party has not . . . put up more of a root-and-branch resistance to the policy of apartheid".<sup>1</sup> Morrah was also increasingly critical of the UP, which he came to regard as "ultimately somewhat acquiescent" in the "malpractices" of the Nationalist government.<sup>2</sup>

Verwoerd's announcement, early in 1960, of a referendum on the republic brought to a head the divergence of opinion between South Africa and the rest of the Commonwealth. Morrah was not optimistic.

"If the republic has to come, I think the prevailing U.K. view would be strongly in favour of keeping it in the Commonwealth. But I don't feel at all confident that all, or even the majority, of the other countries concerned would agree . . . . My impression is that the voters on October 5 who think they can have a republic within the Commonwealth for the asking are living in a fool's paradise."<sup>3</sup>

And so it turned out. The *Round Table* argued in vain for the continued membership of South Africa in order that its government might "be converted to a more humane view of race relations".<sup>4</sup> Verwoerd himself answered that argument, by his conduct at the Prime Ministers' meeting of March 1961.

#### Central Africa and Rhodesia

Central Africa raised much the same questions as its neighbour to the south, with two important differences. On the one hand, the white minority

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<sup>1</sup> Morrah to Mrs James Carruthers [Violet Markham], 9 Dec 1954 (SA file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Morrah to Kidd, 30 July 1963 (SA file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Morrah to Kidd, 29 Sept 1960 (SA file,) RT (O) Papers. The Canadian group was of "the general view . . . that S.A. should be kicked out": H V Macdonnell to Morrah, 25 Jan 1961 (Toronto file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> [Morrah,] "A Republic of South Africa", RT, Dec 1960, pp 3-6.



was very much smaller. On the other, it was (until about 1958 or 1959) officially committed to an ideal of "multi-racialism" which deflected some, at least, of the criticism directed at its neighbour. Again there appears to have been a division within the Moot, roughly between older and younger generations.

The older generation was certainly in the ascendant in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1949 Elspeth Huxley was commissioned to write on "Greater Rhodesia". She listed the reasons which made federation an "economic necessity", then stated the one reason which counted against federation: the deep cleavage, even opposition, between the native policies of Southern Rhodesia and the territories of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Some compromise on both sides was a necessity.

"The British Government may have to sacrifice, as trustee, some measure of ultimate African self-rule in return for greater security and prosperity. The Europeans of Southern Rhodesia, on the other hand, will have to yield some measure of their resolve to confine the development of each race in separate channels."<sup>1</sup>

Malcolm, who wrote on Central Africa the following year, was less restrained. In his view, the British government should seek to persuade Africans that unity was "in their best interests", but it could not allow them to influence its policy. Power must, "so far as human foresight can go, be strictly reserved for the White race".<sup>2</sup>

Malcolm supported amalgamation of the three territories on the same basis as the Southern Rhodesian constitution - not federation. In 1951 he wrote a trenchant critique of the proposals drawn up by the London

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<sup>1</sup> [Huxley,] "Greater Rhodesia", *RT*, June 1949, pp 227-33.

<sup>2</sup> [Malcolm,] "One Rhodesia or Two?", *RT*, June 1950, pp 220-25.

conference of officials.' Altrincham tried to persuade him to moderate his criticism, and arranged a meeting with Velensky, who was prepared to accept the proposals.<sup>2</sup> Morrah conveyed Sir Evelyn Baring's opinion "that closer union is essential . . . if any balance is to be preserved with the Union at all, and that we are now approaching our last chance to achieve it".<sup>3</sup> Malcolm remained impervious. Reserving powers would merely produce friction, without placating African "minority [*sic*] opinion, and that not of a highly enlightened character".<sup>4</sup>

Despite differing on the constitutional question, Altrincham's views were not far out of line with Malcolm's. Commemorating the centenary of Rhodes's birth, he recalled that Rhodes had been a lifelong opponent of 'Downing Street', and asserted that black-white relations in Africa were being "embittered by well-meaning interference from oversea". Unlike such 'ignorant' meddlers, Rhodes would never have dreamt of "surrendering [Africa's] defence and guidance to its present-day black inhabitants".<sup>5</sup>

Ironically, it was through Malcolm's contacts in the British South Africa Company that Garfield Todd, Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia from 1953 to 1958, was induced to act as the *Round Table's* correspondent.<sup>6</sup> Todd was a *rara avis* - a liberal white Rhodesian. His articles emphasised that all hope of stability depended on the growth of a more "liberal spirit"

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<sup>1</sup> [Malcolm,] "Parturiunt Montes", *RT*, Sept 1951, pp 337-43.

<sup>2</sup> Altrincham to Morrah, 28 July 1951, and Morrah to Altrincham, 31 July 1951 (Rhodesias file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Morrah to Malcolm, 10 Aug 1951, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm, "Closer Union", 19 Sept 1951, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> [Altrincham,] "Rhodes and Rhodesia", *RT*, March 1953, pp 103-17.

<sup>6</sup> Ellis Robins to Malcolm, 22 March 1954 and cable 27 April 1954 (Rhodesias file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

amongst his white countrymen. After he was ousted by a party coup, Todd grew increasingly outspoken in his attacks on white Rhodesian politics, prompting frequent complaints of bias from Rhodesia House. By 1960 it was clear that Todd's views no longer accorded with the dominant opinion in the Moot. While Morrah expressed the view that the Federation still represented a "middle way" of "partnership", Todd quoted Lord Malvern as speaking of partnership between "the rider and the horse", and called on Britain "to suspend the Southern Rhodesian constitution and to send troops to the Colony".<sup>1</sup>

Because of support from younger members of the Moot, Todd was allowed to continue writing for the *Round Table* until June 1962. But his contribution to that issue, again calling for British intervention, was too much for some members. Horsfall thought Todd's views "intolerable", and Todd himself "simply a discredited politician who has lost any support he had in his own country".<sup>2</sup> Horsfall's view prevailed, and Morrah therefore wrote to Todd to terminate the agreement. The Moot, he said, had asked him to find a correspondent "more in sympathy with official policy both in Salisbury and in Whitehall".<sup>3</sup>

Harry Grenfell of the Chartered Company then provided a one-off article more on the lines which Morrah required.<sup>4</sup> A more permanent arrangement was made with D T M Williams, a journalist and public relations officer employed by the Federation. Again he took a strong pro-settler

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<sup>1</sup> [Morrah,] "A Republic of South Africa", *RT*, Dec 1960, pp 3-6; [Todd,] "The Monckton Report", *ibid.*, pp 22-28.

<sup>2</sup> Horsfall to Morrah, 18 July 1962 (Rhodesias file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Morrah to Todd, 1 Aug 1962, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> [Grenfell,] "Central Africa in 1963", *RT*, Sept 1962, pp 361-67.

line. In his view the African was "a born dictator". The United Nations he compared to a Nazi rally; and he suggested that the British government was "going back on its word", out of an "inexplicable desire to bow down to the will of Africanism".<sup>1</sup> Morrah considered Williams's articles "a useful corrective". Nevertheless, "the younger members of our editorial committee thought you were pushing us too far towards the other extreme".<sup>2</sup> At Maud's request the British High Commissioner found a new correspondent, John Spicer ("intelligent, liberal, balanced and with very sound judgement"), who wrote from December 1965 onwards.<sup>3</sup> (By then, of course, Hailey was the only member of the older generation still alive.)

Smith's decision to declare independence in November 1965 at last forced the Moot into accepting the position which Todd had been urging: that of calling for direct rule by the British government.

"There are two main reasons for this. First, it has been openly and blatantly humiliated . . . . Secondly, it would be wrong to leave the territory under the control of a small minority, however much they may represent the most advanced elements of the population. Government on the basis of race is bad government and can only endure by becoming steadily worse."

Even at this stage, the *Round Table* opposed handing Rhodesia over to majority rule, because "this would lead to a break up of White Rhodesian society and the ruin of the economy". Instead, Britain should assume responsibility for "the next decade at least". If sanctions did not work, force - "overwhelming and decisive" - would have to be used.<sup>4</sup> Otherwise

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<sup>1</sup> [Williams,] "Rhodesian Divorce", *RT*, Sept 1963, pp 342-52; [idem,] "Rhodesia and Nyasaland", *ibid.*, pp 409-14.

<sup>2</sup> Morrah to Williams, 23 March 1964 (Rhodesias file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Jack Johnston to Maud. nd [Dec 1964] (1964-65 file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> [Beaton,] "A Policy for Rhodesia", *RT*, March 1966, pp 107-11.



the Commonwealth would break up; and it was "difficult to imagine a more equal end to so hopeful an experiment".<sup>1</sup>

### The Common Market

As early as 1926, Harold Butler had predicted that "unless Great Britain forms part of a larger economic unit, she cannot avoid becoming part of a European economic union".<sup>2</sup> At the time, his observation was to be understood as part of a plea for the liberalisation of intra-Commonwealth trade. The disappointment of such hopes under the Ottawa system perhaps gave force to the observation.

A generation later, the idea of an opposition between Commonwealth and Common Market was clearly no longer realistic.

"The nations of the Commonwealth, for as long as they have enjoyed sovereign control of their own fiscal systems, have been accustomed to adjust them to a strict calculation of their own material advantage . . . . They will scarcely complain . . . if in the hard bargaining necessary in Brussels British Ministers give first though not exclusive consideration to tangible British interests."<sup>3</sup>

The *Round Table* was firmly of the belief that British entry into the Common Market conformed with "tangible British interests". Three main reasons were adduced for this view. First, "we cannot help being a European Power". It was better to be in Europe, in a position of leadership, than outside and unable to influence. Secondly, "America prefers to deal with Europe as a unity, and regards England as part of Europe". The alternative to entry into Europe might not include a continuing "special relationship".

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<sup>1</sup> D Austin, "Why not Surrender to Mr Smith?", *RT*, July 1966, pp 238-44.

<sup>2</sup> [Butler,] "Europe at the Cross-Roads", *RT*, June 1926, pp 476-501.

<sup>3</sup> [Morrah,] "Commonwealth and Common Market", *RT*, June 1962, pp 223-27.



Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, Britain's economy was "distinctly sluggish", and threatened to remain so without new opportunities for expansion and access to larger markets.<sup>1</sup>

Morrah persuaded Eric (Lord) Roll ("the official nearest to the centre of negotiations"<sup>2</sup>) to write a key-note article for the *Round Table*. Roll acknowledged that the views of Commonwealth governments ranged "from the cautionary to the almost plainly hostile". Were there any grounds for hoping that the negotiations could clear some of the obstacles? Roll thought so, if the problem could be "taken apart into its main constituents". Moreover, it was necessary "to compare not what is with what is proposed, but what is proposed with what might otherwise be". And in this connection, a Britain "with a faster rate of economic growth, with wider trading possibilities, with a stronger voice in Europe, must be a more useful member of the Commonwealth".<sup>3</sup>

The Koot was primarily interested in the long-term political consequences of entry. Roll expressed the opinion that many of the political aspects of the Treaty of Rome might never be implemented. Morrah was less cynical. Despite the fact that the Common Market possessed no federal institutions "it cannot be immune to the natural processes of mutation". Indeed, "it is . . . bound . . . to change its attitude as new problems emerge". Federation was therefore likely to be on the future agenda.

"The political right of secession scarcely touches the economic impracticability of unscrambling the eggs. If

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<sup>1</sup> [Morrah,] "Britain in Europe", *RT*, Sept 1962, pp 323-26.

<sup>2</sup> Morrah to Kidd, 29 Sept 1961 (SA file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> [Roll,] "Commonwealth and Common Markets", *RT*, Dec 1961, pp 7-19.

we enter Europe we enter for good; and we cannot be sure that the Europe we enter will remain immutably a confederation of sovereign states, and will never develop on organic lines."

Britain could participate in both the Common Market and the Commonwealth "without incompatibility", precisely because the Commonwealth "no longer has any political structure in the domain of foreign policy and defence", whereas the Market existed in order to pursue "a joint policy", in ever increasing fields. Whether "the British people are psychologically ready for so momentous a change" was another matter.<sup>1</sup>

The Round Table groups also contributed to the debate. On the whole, they were more sympathetic to the British position than were their own governments. According to the Melbourne group, Menzies's criticism of Britain "surprised not only Mr Sandys but also many Australians". There were good grounds for thinking that "the short term losses might be less and the long-term gains greater than government spokesmen suggest".<sup>2</sup> From Canada, Macdonnell reported that opinion was coming round to the

"*Toronto Globe and Mail* point that if joining the Common Market will mean increased prosperity for Britain, she will be a better market for Canada and other Commonwealth countries than a Britain in the doldrums".<sup>3</sup>

In New Zealand opinion was very largely against British entry; but the New Zealand group was divided<sup>4</sup>, and there were those who saw "considerable attraction . . . in the idea that preferences . . . might be surrendered in

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<sup>1</sup> [Morrah,] "Britain in Europe", RT, Sept 1962, pp 323-26.

<sup>2</sup> [Melbourne group,] "Australia and EEC", RT, Dec 1961, pp 43-48.

<sup>3</sup> H V Macdonnell to Morrah, 25 Oct 1961 (Toronto file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>4</sup> G Wood to Morrah, 11 Oct 1961 (NZ file,) RT (O) Papers.

return for assurances of expanding outlets in a united Europe".<sup>1</sup>

De Gaulle's veto necessitated "an exercise in what Delane used to call 'the delicate art of journalistic curvature'".<sup>2</sup> The search for a wider economic unit went on. In 1967 the *Round Table* supported calls for a North Atlantic free trade area.<sup>3</sup> When the debate on the Common Market was reopened in the early 1970s, the *Round Table* once again joined the advocates of British entry, emphasising the advantages to be gained by all Commonwealth members from a stronger and more European Britain.<sup>4</sup>

#### The New Round Table

"Like a familiar landscape, the British Commonwealth changes gradually, almost imperceptibly, but in the long run radically . . . . No single event, even if noticed when it happens, is more than a passing wonder, yet in a couple of generations the changes may leave only the broad contour of hill and valley to recall for the returned exile the scene of his childhood."<sup>5</sup>

Hodson's choice of simile was peculiarly apt. Even the most radical changes in the structure of the Commonwealth - such as the Statute of Westminster, or the London Declaration - were mainly symbolic, confirming trends which were already apparent. The most significant changes were cumulative. Some the Round Tablers had welcomed; others they made the best of. But the Commonwealth of the 1960s was a far cry from that of 1910, when the original Round Tablers had set out on their mission.

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<sup>1</sup> [NZ gp,] "NZ: Concern over UK-EEC Negotiations", *RT*, March 1962, pp 410-15.

<sup>2</sup> Morrah to H W Macdonnell, 6 Feb 1963 (Toronto file,) *RT* (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> [Beaton,] "An Important Proposal", *RT*, Jan 1967, pp 3-5.

<sup>4</sup> "Britain, the Commonwealth and Europe", *RT*, Oct 1971, pp 431-35.

<sup>5</sup> [Hodson,] "The Future of the Commonwealth", *RT*, June 1956, pp 215-21.

In 1963 the death of the last aboriginal Round Tabler, Lord Brand, prompted the Moot to decide on a special meeting at Ditchley, to consider the Round Table's future. Invitations were sent to the overseas groups, but, as the disgruntled secretary of the Sydney group later commented, the notice given was "short, very short if there was a genuine desire to seek opinion".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, three of the five groups sent memoranda. The New Zealand group was generally content with existing arrangements.<sup>2</sup> The South African group called for more articles from the newly independent countries, and suggested that each issue should concentrate on a single topic.<sup>3</sup> The Sydney group was primarily concerned to forestall the possibility of the *Round Table* being re-constituted as a "Commonwealth-American" review.<sup>4</sup> In later communications the group was more ambitious, proposing an enhanced editorial rôle for the overseas groups, including "much more pre-publication comment" and "a more vigorous expression of sentiment". The group also wanted more coverage of the "old" and less of the "new" Commonwealth.<sup>5</sup>

The Ditchley meeting considered the various options. Marris was inclined to think closure inevitable, but the rest of the Moot was strongly in favour of continuing. The need to bring the magazine "more up-to-date", as the first step towards increasing its circulation, was realised. No

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- 1 MacCallum, "The Round Table", 17 March 1965 (Sydney file,) RT (O) Papers.
  - 2 "The Round Table . . . Views of the NZ group" [1963] *ibid.*
  - 3 H M Robertson, "SA and the Round Table", 30 Nov 1963 (Beaton file,) RT (O) Papers.
  - 4 D MacCallum to Morrah, 29 Nov 1963, *ibid.*
  - 5 D MacCallum, "The Round Table", 17 March 1965; MacCallum to Morrah, 13 April 1964 (Sydney file,) RT (O) Papers.

firm decisions were reached, but there was an agreement to look into the possibilities of forming groups in the "new" Commonwealth and of introducing signed articles. It was also agreed that the Moot should be strengthened by recruiting "younger members who have already shown their interest in the contemporary problems of the new Commonwealth", and also a new editor. (Morrah was now 67 and anxious to retire.)<sup>1</sup> The banker Sir Jeremy Morse and the former Colonial Secretary Viscount Boyd had already been recruited in 1960, the journalist and future minister Timothy Raison in 1962. Five new members were added in 1964: the Africanist Dennis Austin, the journalist Leonard Beaton, Richard Hornby MP, the diplomat Sir Robert Wade-Gery and the insurance broker Sir Robin Williams. All were, in Morrah's description, "young progressive Conservatives".<sup>2</sup>

Beaton was taken on as assistant editor, with the intention that he would replace Morrah. (He did so at the end of 1965, earlier than expected, because of Morrah's illness.) Canadian-born, he was (like the rest of the Moot) a strong believer both in the American connection and in the "modern" Commonwealth. Indeed, for him the two elided, and there were only two real models for the developed world, the "British" and the Communist. Nevertheless, he was at home in India (and France, where his wife was born), more so than in Australasia, where he found the general view of the Commonwealth "adolescent".<sup>3</sup> In 1965 he was sent on a tour to establish contact with the existing groups, look into the possibility of

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1 Marris to John [Cadwallader?], 11 May 1965 (Beaton file); Macadam to Sir Robin Williams, 20 May 1964 (Moot file,) RT (O) Papers.

2 Morrah to MacCallum, 22 June 1964 (Sydney file,) RT (O) Papers. Boyd dropped out of the Moot in 1964.

3 Beaton, "Report on Round Table Trip" [1965] (Beaton file,) RT (O) Papers.



forming new ones, and gather impressions as to the best way forward for the *Round Table*. He came back with the firm conclusion that the magazine should drop its rule of anonymity, partly in order to move with the times, partly in order to attract new readers with "names", and partly because the *Round Table* had lost some of its "authority" amongst the general reading public.<sup>1</sup>

Although he made contact with several suitable group members in India and Pakistan, Beaton confessed himself "baffled about just how we can make effective use of the groups". He found the Canadian group virtually non-existent. The Australasian groups were still strong and intellectually distinguished, but they "have never concerned themselves with Commonwealth affairs and really have no views on them".<sup>2</sup> This problem of the groups was never really resolved. An Indian group was started in 1967, but within a few years it and the Canadian, South African and New Zealand groups had become virtually moribund, with the result that articles were commissioned directly from London. This left the Australian groups in an anomalous position. The practice of publishing signed and more controversial articles made group editing redundant, but the Australian groups were still jealous of their responsibility for commissioning articles. Paul Daniell, employed as a promotional consultant by the Moot, suggested that these last remaining groups should be wound up, since there was no longer any "driving purpose behind their existence".<sup>3</sup> The London group neither wound up the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. Hodson had suggested relaxing the rule of anonymity as early as 1935: Minutes of RT meeting, 12 to 15 Jan 1935, RT (O) Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Beaton to Wade-Gery, 1 June 1965 and 14 June 1965 (Beaton file,) RT (O) Papers.

<sup>3</sup> J P S Daniell, "Some Thoughts on Round Table Groups", 31 March 1969 (Moot file,) RT (O) Papers.

groups nor attempted to revive them. From Leonie Foster's account it is clear that the manner of the Australian groups' demise left a sense of resentment.<sup>1</sup>

In July 1966, the "new" *Round Table* was launched, with a vigorous editorial setting out the "central objectives" for the Commonwealth, and promising "strong views on public issues".<sup>2</sup> The "new" *Round Table* consisted largely of signed articles - unsigned chronicles came to an end in 1967, except in the case of Rhodesia. They were often written by the leading experts in their fields, more often now academics than officials. Steadily, the *Round Table's* circulation climbed back up; and the immediate financial danger was met by a very successful appeal (bringing in some £25,000 over three years). Another financial crisis closed the publication between October 1981 and January 1983, before the *Round Table* returned in its present form, with a new publisher, but still fulfilling the same function, as both advocate and "think tank for the contemporary Commonwealth".<sup>3</sup>

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1 Foster, *High Hopes* (Melbourne, 1986), pp 153 ff.

2 [Raison,] "The New Round Table", *RT*, July 1966, pp 211-14.

3 [P Lyon,], "The Round Table Revived and the Contemporary Commonwealth", *RT*, Jan 1983, p 10.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

Earlier historians have generally portrayed the history of the Round Table as an anticlimax. Starting out full of vigour and confidence, the Round Tablers (according to this view) were quickly frustrated in their original aims, and consequently drifted on with a disintegrating sense of cohesion and a diminishing sense of purpose.

There is something to be said for such an interpretation. By the 1950s and '60s the Moot was clearly no longer a cohesive group in the sense that the original Moot was. Nevertheless, it is important not to underestimate the differences within the earlier group, nor to overestimate those within the later group. The most significant single issue in Edwardian Imperial politics, the tariff question, was left to one side, the subject of an agreement to disagree. There were frequent reports of "fearful ructions" within the Moot. The wartime disagreements within the group were perhaps the most bitter of all. Yet the Moot carried on. In the 1920s and '30s new issues divided the Moot: Kenya, China, Germany. But in some respects the interwar Moot was more cohesive than before. Certainly, it was able to reach a consensus on many important policy matters. Even after the Second World War, with the predominance of "Kindergarten" members broken and a whole range of contentious issues brought to the fore - the Cold War, Indian independence, decolonisation in Africa, apartheid, Suez, Europe - the extent to which the Moot both sought and reached a consensus was remarkable.

The "failure" of the Round Table "movement" has tended to obscure both the extent of disagreement between Curtis and his

colleagues before the publication of his *Problem of the Commonwealth* and the persistence of a belief in ultimate "organic union" thereafter.

There was much common ground between Curtis and his critics before 1916, but also significant differences over tactics, timing and the powers of a federal government. These differences were undoubtedly important in preventing the group from carrying out its original strategy.

Federalism was always more attractive as an abstract and undefined idea than as a concrete scheme. John Kendle was undoubtedly right in identifying Dominion nationalism as another major obstacle to the realisation of the group's original aims. Nevertheless, it is by no means clear that either the differences within the Koot or the form which Dominion nationalism took would have been the same had it not been for the outbreak of war.

In the 1920s and '30s, most members of the Koot combined an acceptance of the impracticability of immediate federal union with a belief in its ultimate realisation. With hindsight this seems remarkably optimistic. The trend of Anglo-Dominion relations continued to be towards greater independence. Yet the Round Tablers interpreted this as clearing away the deadwood, in order to build on surer foundations. They were wrong: but were they inevitably so? At the time there seemed good reason to believe as they did. Few Dominion nationalists (even in Canada and South Africa) conceived of a future outside the Empire; and the Round Tablers were perhaps more realistic than their critics in thinking that there were powerful inducements to unity. Certainly they were more realistic in thinking that the long-term alternative to "organic union" was not unity derived from co-operation. Curtis was more prescient than Jebb.

Only in the late 1940s did the belief in Imperial unity become untenable. It is sometimes said that America killed the British Empire. It would appear from an examination of the Round Tablers' views in this crucial period that this was partly the case - in the sense that Britain, no less than the "old" Dominions, now looked to America rather than the Empire for the framework of its security. This in turn reflected the long-term decline in British power, which had prompted the Round Table's creation. Even so, the Round Tablers believed that the Commonwealth still had an important rôle to play - now defined in terms of diversity rather than unity: and as a "bridge" rather than as a "unit of power".

Both the tenacity and the adaptability of the *Round Table* magazine and its editorial Moot can be seen throughout their history. Those who constituted the earlier Moot were certainly tenacious in clinging to the idea of Imperial or Commonwealth unity. At the same time, they were also realistic in responding to the inevitability of change. They were seldom tempted to retreat into a purely negative and reactionary "diehardism", and they were perhaps important in countering the influence of those who were.

The extent of the Round Table's influence is, of course, very difficult to assess. The Round Tablers were an undoubted influence on some aspects of Lloyd George's policy, especially in India and Ireland. It is one of the ironies of Round Table history that a movement founded to strengthen the Empire should have as its most enduring achievement the fact that it helped to smooth the Empire's disintegration. Nevertheless, the Round Tablers were not conscious of the process. They believed that they were helping to save the Empire by revitalising and



redirecting the Imperial ethic: stabilising and enhancing the Imperial connection by basing it on surer foundations.

Even in the case of India and Ireland, the Round Table appears to have been less significant as a direct influence on government policy than as an interpreter of policy shifts. Once some change in policy became inevitable, there was a market for serviceable ideas. The Round Table's interpretation of the Imperial ethic helped to accommodate change without allowing the whole Imperial position to slip, by providing the language in which concessions could be portrayed as the natural outcome of previous policy. Thereby the Round Table helped to limit change, as well as making it respectable. It is this mediating rôle, between conservatism and radicalism, and between officialdom and opinion, which is the most striking aspect of the *Round Table* magazine as a whole.

Despite their close contacts with officials and policy-makers, as a group the Round Tablers were ultimately somewhat marginal to the real political process. They were seldom able to influence the making, as opposed to the interpretation, of British policy. This in itself says something about the nature of British Imperialism. The Empire was useful to the extent that it served British interests. As far as those in positions of power were concerned, it was hardly an end in itself.

APPENDIX ABOARD TABLE EDITORS

Philip Kerr	Nov 1910 - Dec 1916 <sup>1</sup>
Reginald Coupland	March 1917 - June 1919
Geoffrey Dawson	Sept 1919 - Dec 1920
John Dove	March 1921 - March 1934 <sup>2</sup>
H V Hodson	June 1934 - Sept 1939 <sup>3</sup>
Sir Reginald Coupland	Dec 1939 - March 1941
Geoffrey Crowther	June 1941
Henry Brooke	Sept 1941 - June 1942
Geoffrey Dawson	Sept 1942 - Dec 1944 <sup>4</sup>
Dermot Morrah	March 1945 - Sept 1965 <sup>5</sup>
Leonard Beaton	Dec 1965 - April 1970
Michael Howard/Robert Jackson	July 1970 - Oct 1971
Robert Jackson	Jan 1972 - Jan 1975
Alexander MacLeod	April 1975 - April 1979
Evan Charlton	July 1979 - Oct 1981
Peter Lyon	Jan 1983 - present

Dates indicate issues for which editor was primarily responsible.

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- 1 Assisted by sub-committee of Oliver, Brand and Craik 1911-13; by Grigg (assistant editor) Sept 1913 to March 1915.
  - 2 Assisted by Hodson (assistant editor) from Oct 1930.
  - 3 Assisted by Harlow, Sept - Dec 1938.
  - 4 Assisted by Malcolm, Sept - Dec 1944. (Dawson died in Nov 1944.)
  - 5 Assisted by Hodson, March - June 1946; by Beaton (assistant editor) from 1964.

APPENDIX BMEMBERS OF THE LONDON MOOT BEFORE 1981: DATES OF ATTENDANCE<sup>1</sup>  
[excludes occasional guests]

Altrincham, 1st Baron, see GRIGG

ANERY, Rt Hon Leo	1910 - 20 - ?
ANGLESEY, Marquess of	*1909
AUSTIN, Dennis	1964 - 83
BAKER, Sir Herbert	*1913 - 32 - ?
BARNETT, Guy	1976 - 87
BEATON, Leonard	1964 - 71
BOYD, Viscount, Alan Lennox-	*1960 - 64
BRAND, Baron, Robert Henry	1909 - 63
BROOKE, Baron, Henry	1941 - 66
BUCHAN, Alastair	1971 - 76
BULL, Hedley	1978 - 85
BUTLER, Harold	*1931 - 34
CAROE, Sir Olaf	1948 - 77
CECIL, Viscount, Lord Robert	1910 - 15 - ?
CHARLTON, Evan	1979 - 83
CHIROL, Sir Valentine	*1915 - 21 - ?
CHRISTIE, Loring C	1923 - 26
COUPLAND, Sir Reginald	1913 - 42 - ?
CRAIK, Sir George Lillie	1909 - 22 - ?
CROWTHER, Sir Geoffrey	1941 - 44
CURTIS, Lionel	1909 - 55
DAVSON, Geoffrey	1909 - 44

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\* Indicates infrequent attendance.

<sup>1</sup> ? indicates lapse of attendance. Middle date indicates last recorded attendance at RT Meeting. RT membership was informal: these dates show attendance.

DOVE, John	1910 - 34
DUNCAN, Sir Patrick	*1910 - 37 - ?
EDWARDS, Marcus	1975 - 83
FFETHAM, Hon Richard	*1910 - 49 - ?
FRANKS, Baron, Sir Oliver	1954 - 59 - ?
GOBE-BOOTH, Baron	1975 - 84
GRIGG, Sir Edward, 1st Baron Altrincham	1912 - 55
HAILEY, 1st Baron, Sir Malcolm	1936 - 69
HANCOCK, Sir Keith	*1924 - 25, 1934 - 35
HARLOW, Vincent	1938 - 50 - ?
HAEMAN, Nicholas	1979 - 83
HICHENS, Lionel	1910 - 40
HODSON, Henry Vincent	1930 - present
HOLLAND(-MARTIN), Robert Martin	1909 - 21 - ?
HOLT, John	*1948 - 50
HORNBY, Richard	1964 - 81
HORSFALL, Percy	1921 - 65
HOWARD, Sir Michael	1970 - 79
HOWICK, Viscount	*1909 - 11 - ?
HUED, Rt Hon Douglas	1966 - 78
INGRAM, Derek	1971 - present
JACKSON, Robert	1970 - present
JAMESON, Sir Leander Starr	*1909
KERR, Philip, 11th Marquess of Lothian	1909 - 40
Lennor-Boyd, Alan, See BOYD	
LESLIE, Samuel Clement	1966 - 80
Lothian, 11th Marquess, see KERR	
LOVAT, 14th Baron, Simon	*1909 - 21 - ?
MACADAM, Sir Ivison	1931 - 74

MACDONALD, Rt Hon Malcolm	*1934
MACINTOSH, John	1972 - 76
MACLEOD, Alexander	1975 - present
MALCOLM, Sir Dougal	1911 - 55
MAUSERGH, Nicholas	1947 - 74
MARRIS, Adam Denzil	1948 - 83
MARRIS, Sir William	*1909 - 29 - ?
MAUD, Baron Redcliffe-, Sir John	1934 - 79
MESTON, 1st Baron, Sir James	*1912 - 21 - ?
MILLER, J D B	1973 - 75
MILNER, 1st Viscount, Sir Alfred	1909 - 25
MORRAH, Dermot	1943 - 74
MORSE, Sir Jeremy	1960 - 88
OLIVER, Frederick Scott	1909 - 21
PELSON, John Hubert	*1934 - 36
PERRY, J F	*1910 - 33 - ?
RAISON, Rt Hon Timothy	1962 - present
Redcliffe-Maud, Baron, see MAUD	
Robinson, Geoffrey, see DAWSON	
SELBORNE, 2nd Earl, William	1910 - 20 - ?
STEEL-MAILLAND, Rt Hon Sir Arthur	1909 - 13, 1915 - 21 - ?
THOMSON, David	1966 - 89
VADE-GERY, Sir Robert	1964/79 - present
VATT, David	1973 - 87
VILLIAMS, Sir Robin	1964 - 93
WOLMER, Viscount	*1909 - 10 - ?
WYLDHAM, Hon Hugh, Lord Leconfield	*1913 - 29 - ?
ZIMMERN, Sir Alfred	1914 - 19 - ?



## APPENDIX C

## ROUND TABLE COVERAGE, BY SUBJECT, 1910-66 (%)

	11.10 to 6.14	9.14 to 9.18	12.18 to 9.39	12.39 to 9.45	12.45 to 3.66
Empire/Cwealth Relations (financial/econ)	7.1 (-)	3.6 (-)	5.5 (1.0)	3.7 (0.6)	6.3 (1.2)
UK inc N Ireland (N Ireland) <sup>1</sup>	24.5 <sup>1</sup>	21.7 <sup>1</sup>	11.6 (0.4)	15.6 (0.2)	14.5 (2.7)
(financial/econ)	(4.4)	(10.5)	(3.8)	(6.3)	(4.7)
Ireland/Eire <sup>1</sup>	(8.9) <sup>1</sup>	(8.4) <sup>1</sup>	7.5	5.7	
Canada	11.8	8.3	8.0	7.1	7.7
Australia	10.7	8.4	8.3	6.5	7.5
New Zealand	10.0	6.9	8.0	7.3	5.8
South Africa <sup>2</sup>	10.6	5.1	8.1	7.3	7.1 <sup>2</sup>
India/Pakistan	6.9	4.4	7.8	8.1	9.6
Egypt/Palestine <sup>3</sup>	0.6	0.8	1.8	0.5	
West Africa	-	-	0.1	-	1.1
East Africa	-	-	1.1	0.1	2.1
Central Africa	-	-	0.4	0.1	3.3
etc Empire/Cwealth	-	-	0.4	0.2	2.9
Empire/Cwealth (total)	82.2	59.2	68.6	62.3	67.9
International Relations <sup>4</sup> (financial/econ)	7.4 (-)	25.8 <sup>4</sup> (0.8)	12.0 (3.3)	22.3 <sup>4</sup> (2.1)	6.4 (2.9)
USA	-	8.0	6.5	6.7	7.1
Europe	7.3	7.0	8.9	4.4	5.5
(Ireland/Eire) <sup>1</sup>					6.2 <sup>1</sup>
(Egypt/Palestine) <sup>3</sup>					1.4 <sup>3</sup>
Middle East	-	-	0.2	1.0	2.0
Asia/Pacific	3.1	-	3.7	3.1	2.9
etc	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.6
International (total)	17.8	40.8 <sup>4</sup>	31.4	37.7 <sup>4</sup>	32.1

Derived from number of pages devoted to each subject; overlapping subjects (eg "India and Commonwealth Relations") apportioned equally.

<sup>1</sup> Ireland and Eire included in UK to 9.18 (sub-total includes N Ireland); included in Empire/Cwealth to 9.45.

<sup>2</sup> South Africa included in Empire/Cwealth throughout (includes Protectorates).

<sup>3</sup> Egypt/Palestine included in Empire/Cwealth to 9.45.

<sup>4</sup> International relations includes war coverage/peace aims, 1914-18 and 1939-45.

APPENDIX DROUND TABLE ARTICLES. BY AUTHOR. 1910-66 (%)


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	11.10	9.14	12.18	12.39	12.45
	to	to	to	to	to
	6.14	9.18	9.39	9.45	3.66

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"Policy" articles

% identified by London RTer	49(57)	58(71)	47(58)	28(46)	27(32)
" " by Dominion RTer/gp	17(20)	-	5(6)	2(3)	10(12)
" " by non-RTer	19(23)	23(29)	29(36)	31(51)	48(56)
% unidentified	15	19	19	39	15

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"Chronicle" articles

% identified by London RTer	15(16)	1(2)	4(4)	16(16)	2(2)
" " by Dominion RTer/gp	81(84)	83(95)	57(61)	52(54)	42(42)
" " by non-RTer	-	2(3)	32(35)	29(30)	55(56)
% unidentified	4	14	7	3	1

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Derived from number of articles by each author.

Figure in brackets denotes % of total identified.

"Dominion RTer/gp" includes all articles sent by overseas RT groups.

Joint articles counted as half.

"Chronicle articles": all articles from UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa printed in second half of review; Indian articles from June 1918, Irish articles from June 1925, printed in second half; US articles from June 1920 (printed in either half); Pakistan articles from March 1948, Central African articles from June 1954, East African articles from Dec 1954 to Sept 1958, printed in second half.

Reprints of documents, speeches, etc not counted.

APPENDIX EMEMBERS OF THE LONDON MOOT BEFORE 1966: BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ALTRINCHAM, 1st Baron, see GRIGG.

AMERY, Rt Hon Leopold Charles Maurice Stennett (1873-1955):

b Gorakhpur, UP, India; s of Charles F Amery (Indian Forest Dept), brought up by mother in England from 1877 (bro Harold killed in action 1916); m 1910 Adeliza Florence (Brydce), d of John Hamar Greenwood of Ontario, sister of 1st Viscount Greenwood; 2 s (elder John executed for treason 1945, younger Julian Conservative politician). Educ Harrow, Balliol College Oxford (1st in Greats 1896); Fellow of All Souls 1897; 1896-97 private sec to Leonard Courtney MP; 1898 "*Manchester Guardian*" corres in Balkans; 1899-1909 "*Times*" staff (SA war corres, ed "*Times History of the 1st War*"); 1902 called to Bar; 1907-10? funded by Rhodes Trust; unsuccessful Unionist candidate 1906, 1908, Jan and Dec 1910; 1911-45 Unionist/Conservative MP for Sparkbrook/S Birmingham; founder member of Empire Parlt Asscn; 1914-16 member of Intelligence Service, Flanders and Balkans (Lt Col); 1916-18 Asst Sec to War Cabinet; 1918-21 Milner's Parlt Under-Sec at CO; from 1919 Rhodes Trustee; 1921-22 Parlt and Financial Sec to Admiralty; PC 1922; 1922-23 First Lord of the Admiralty; 1924-29 Sec of State for Colonies (from 1925 also for Dominion Affairs); 1940-45 Sec of State for India; CH 1945; pub inc "*My Political Life*" (3 vols, 1953-55).

ANGLESEY, 6th Marquess of, Charles Henry Alexander Paget, succeeded cousin 1905 (1885-1947): s of Lord Alexander Paget; m 1912 Lady Victoria Manners; 1 s, 5 d. Educ Eton, Sandhurst; Royal Horse Guards; Lord Chamberlain to Queen Mary 1922-47; GCVO 1928.

AUSTIN, Dennis Gilbert (b. 1922): Research Fellow, ICS and Chatham House; Reader in Commonwealth Studies, Univ of London; 1963-83 Prof of Government, Manchester Univ; Many pubs on Africa.

BAKER, Sir Herbert, kt 1926 (1862-1946): s of T H Baker; m Florence Edmeades; 3 s, 1 d. Educ Tonbridge School; qualified as architect; practised at Cape Town, 1892-1902, Transvaal 1902-1913, London and Delhi thereafter; works include Groote Schuur, Rhodes Memorial, New Delhi Legislative Buildings, Government Houses at Nairobi and Mombasa, Rhodes House Oxford, Bank of England; KCIE 1930.

BEATON, Leonard (1929-71): b Montreal; married Katherine Bougarel of France, 1 d. Educ Westmount High School, McGill Univ, St Catherine's College Cambridge; staff Montreal "*Gazette*"; 1954-56 London staff Reuters; 1956 naval corres "*Times*"; 1957-62 defence corres "*Guardian*" (also reported Common Market negotiations); 1963-65 Director, Institute for Strategic

**STUDIES**; *Round Table* editor 1965-70; 1970-71 freelance journalist; 1971 rejoined *Times*.

**BOYD**, Rt Hon Alan Tindal Lennox-, 1st Viscount, cr 1960 (1904-83): s of Alan Walter Lennox-Boyd; m 1938 Lady Patricia Guinness; 3 s. Educ Sherborne, Christ Church Oxford; unsuccessful candidate (Conservative) 1929; MP for Mid-Beds (Conservative) 1931-60; Parlt Sec, Min of Labour 1938-39; Min of Food 1939-40; Min of Aircraft Production 1943-45; PC 1951; Min of State, Colonial Office 1951-52, Transport 1952-54; Colonial Secretary 1954-59; Managing Director Arthur Guinness, Sons & Co 1960-67; various directorships; Chm 1961-64, President 1964-83 Royal Commonwealth Soc; Chm VSO 1962-64; CH 1960.

**BRAND**, Robert Henry, Baron, cr 1946 (1878-1963): s of 2nd Viscount Hampden (Unionist MP and Governor NSW); m 1917 Phyllis Langhorne (d. 1937), sister of Nancy Astor; 1 s (killed in action 1945), 2 d. Educ Marlborough, New College Oxford (1st in Modern History 1901); 1901 Fellow of All Souls; 1902-09 Asst Sec and Sec to Inter-Colonial Council of Transvaal and ORC; 1908-09 sec to Transvaal delegates, SA National Convention; 1909-60 Director Lazard Bros & Co Ltd, 1922-59 Director Times Publishing Co, director Lloyd's Bank and other financial institutions; 1915-18 member Imperial Munitions Board, Ottawa; 1917-18 Deputy Chairman, British Mission in Washington; 1919 financial adviser to Lord Robert Cecil at Versailles; 1920 Vice-President, International Finance Conf, Brussels; 1922 SA financial rep, Genoa Conference; 1929-31 member Macmillan Ctee on Finance and Industry; 1941-44 Chairman British Food Mission, Washington; 1944-46 Rep HM Treasury, Washington (UK delegate at Bretton Woods and Savannah Confs); 1951-56 member BBC General Advisory Council; CMG 1910; pubs inc *"War and National Finance"* (1921).

**BROOKE**, Rt Hon Henry, Baron Brooke of Cumnor, cr 1966 (1903-84): s of Leonard Leslie Brooke, artist and illustrator; older brother killed in action 1918; m 1933 Barbara Mathews, Conservative activist, cr Baroness Brooke of Ystradfellte 1964; 2 s (inc Peter, Conservative politician), 2 d. Educ Marlborough, Balliol College Oxford (2nd in Greats 1926); 1926-27 tutor in philosophy, Balliol; 1927-30 staff of *Economist*; 1930-35 member, 1935-38 deputy director, Conservative Research Dept; 1938-45 Conservative MP for West Lewisham; 1941-42 editor *The Round Table*; 1944-54 member, Central Housing Advisory Ctee; 1945-55 member, London County Council; 1950-66 Conservative MP for Hampstead; 1954-57 Financial Sec to Treasury; 1957-61 Min of Housing and Local Government; 1961-62 Chief Sec to Treasury and Paymaster-General; 1962-64 Home Secretary; 1971-73 Chairman, Joint Select Ctee on Delegated Legislation; PC 1955, CH 1964.

**BUTLER**, Sir Harold Beresford, kt 1946 (1883-1951): s of Dr A J Butler; m 1910 Olive Waters of Dublin; 2 s, 1 d. Educ Eton, Balliol College Oxford (1st in Greats 1905); 1905-12 Fellow of All Souls; 1907-08 Local Govt Board; 1908-14 Home Office; 1914-17 Foreign Office; 1917-19 Ministry of Labour; 1920-32 deputy director, 1932-38 director ILO; 1939-43 Warden of



Nuffield College; 1942-46 Minister at HM Embassy, Washington; CB 1919, KCMG 1946; many pubs.

CAROE, Sir Olaf Kirkpatrick Krunse, kt 1944 (1892-1981): s of Wm Douglas Caroe, ecclesiastical architect; m 1920 Frances Marion Rawstorne, 2 s.  
Educ Winchester, Magdalen College Oxford (2nd in classical mods 1913); 1914-19 Queen's Regiment (Capt); 1919 entered ICS, 1923-32 posts in NWFP, Persian Gulf, Waziristan, Baluchistan; 1933-34 Chief Sec to Governor NWFP; 1934-39 Deputy Sec, 1939-45 Sec External Affairs Dept, Govt of India; 1946-47 Governor NWFP; CIE 1932, CSI 1941, KCIE 1944, KCSI 1945; 1951 Vice-Chairman, Overseas League; 1959-77 President, Tibetan Society of UK; 1966-69 Deputy Chairman, 1969 Vice President, Conservative Commonwealth Council; many pubs.

CECIL, Lord (Edgar Algernon) Robert, Viscount of Chelwood, cr 1923 (1864-1958): s of 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, bro of Lady Selborne; m 1889 Lady Eleanor Lambton, d of 2nd Earl of Durham. Educ Eton, Univ College Oxford (2nd in Jurisprudence 1886, President Union); 1886-88 private sec to father; 1887 called to Bar, 1899 QC; 1906-10 Conservative MP for East Marylebone; 1911-23 Independent Conservative MP for Hitchin; PC 1915; 1915-18 Parlt Under-Sec for Foreign Affairs, 1916-18 Minister for Blockade; 1918-19 Asst Sec of State for Foreign Affairs; 1919 Chairman, Supreme Economic Council, Versailles; 1920-22 SA delegate, LNs; 1923-45 President LNs Union; 1923 Lord Privy Seal (resigned over Welsh Disestablishment); 1924-27 Chancellor of D of Lancaster (resigned over Cabinet oppn to disarmament); 1928-36 President, Nat Asscn of Building Societies; 1924 Woodrow Wilson Peace Prize; 1937 Nobel Peace Prize; CH 1956; many pubs, inc "A Great Experiment: an Autobiography" (1941).

CHIROL, Sir Valentine, kt 1912 (1852-1929): s of Rev Alexander Chirol; never married. Educ France, Germany, Sorbonne; 1872-76 clerk in FO; 1876-92 travelling corres for London "Standard" etc; 1892-97 Berlin corres "Times"; 1897-99 deputy director, 1899-1912 director "Times" foreign department; 1912-14 member of RC on Indian Public Services; 1915 FO Mission to Balkans; many pubs inc "Fifty Years in a Changing World" (1927).

CHRISTIE, Loring C (1885-1941): b Amherst, Nova Scotia. Educ Acadia Univ, Harvard Law School (LLB 1909); lived in USA 1909-13; 1913-23 legal adviser to Dept of External Affairs, Ottawa; member, Canadian delegation at Versailles; 1923 moved to London to take up financial career; 1935-39 again legal adviser to DEA, Ottawa; 1939-41 Canadian Minister to US.

COUPLAND, Sir Reginald, kt 1944 (1884-1952): s of Sidney Coupland, doctor; never married. Educ Winchester, New College Oxford (1st in Greats 1907); 1907-13 Fellow and Lecturer in Ancient History, Trinity College Oxford; 1913-18 Beit Lecturer in Colonial History, Oxford; 1920-48 Beit Professor of History of British Empire, Oxford, and Fellow of All Souls; *Round Table* editor 1917-19 and 1939-41; 1939-50 Fellow of Nuffield College Oxford; member, RC on Superior Civil Services in India, 1923; Adviser, Burma Round



Table Conference, 1931; member, RC on Palestine, 1936-37; member, Cripps Mission to India, 1942; CIE 1928, KCMG 1944; many pubs on Imperial history and politics.

**CRAIK**, Sir George Lillie, 2nd Baronet, inherited title 1927 (1874-1929): s of Rt Hon Sir Henry Craik, Conservative MP; m 1928 Mary Frances, d of Rt Hon Alfred Lyttelton MP. Educ Eton, New College Oxford; 1899 enlisted in City Imperial Volunteers; 1903-09 legal adviser, Transvaal Chamber of Commerce; 1910-14 Chief Constable, Metropolitan Police; 1914-19 Lovat Scouts (Capt, wounded, MC); 1919-29 Managing Director, Commonwealth Trust Ltd.

**CROWTHER**, Sir Geoffrey, kt 1957, Baron Crowther of Headingley, cr 1968 (1907-72); s of Dr Charles Crowther, agricultural chemist; m 1932 Margaret Vorth of Delaware, USA; 2 s, 4 d. Educ Leeds Grammar School, Oundle, Clare College Cambridge (1st, Modern Languages and Economics); Yale and Columbia (Commonwealth Fund Fellow 1929-31); 1932-35 staff, 1935-38 asst editor, 1938-56 editor, *Economist*; 1931-32 adviser to Irish Government; wartime service in Min of Supply 1940-41, Min of Information 1941-42, Min of Production 1942-43; 1956-60 Chairman, Central Advisory Council for Education (Eng), author of "Crowther Report"; 1968-71 Chairman, Ctee on Consumer Credit; 1969-72 Chairman, Commission on the Constitution; numerous company directorates; Chancellor, Open University, 1969-72; pubs inc *An Outline of Money* (1941).

**CURTIS**, Lionel George (1872-1955): s of Rev George J Curtis; m 1920 Gladys Edna (Pat), d of Prebendary Scott of Tiverton. Educ Haileybury, New College Oxford (3rd in Greats 1895); private sec to Leonard Courtney MP then Lord Welby, Chairman London County Council; 1899 enlisted as despatch rider, CIV; 1902 called to Bar; 1901 acting, 1902-04 Town Clerk, Johannesburg; 1904-06 Acting Colonial Sec, Transvaal; 1906-09 Organizing Sec for SA Closer Union Societies; 1907-10 member, Transvaal Legislative Council; General Sec for Round Table from 1910; 1912-13 Beit Lecturer in Colonial History, Oxford; 1919 member of LNs section, British delegation, Versailles; 1920 founder (R)11A (Hon Sec 1920-30, Councillor 1934, President 1944-55); 1921 Sec to Anglo-Irish Conference, 1921-24 CO adviser on Irish affairs; 1923-55 Fellow of All Souls; 2WV, R11A Liaison Officer in Oxford; CH 1949; offered knighthood, but refused, 1924; nominated for Nobel Peace Prize, 1947; numerous publications.

**DAWSON**, (George) Geoffrey, né Robinson (1874-1944): s of George Robinson, banker; changed name 1917 after inheriting Dawson family estate at Settle, Yorks; m 1919 Cecilia Lawley, d of Sir Arthur Lawley, 6th Baron Venlock; 1 s, 2 d. Educ Eton, Magdalen College Oxford (1st in Greats 1897); 1898 All Souls Fellow; 1898 Post Office; 1899-1901 Colonial Office; 1901-05 private sec to Milner; 1905-10 editor, Johannesburg *Star*, 1906-10 *Times* SA corres; 1911 staff *Times*, editor 1912-19 and 1923-41; *Round Table* editor 1919-20 and 1942-44; 1919-23 Estates Bursar, All Souls, and director, Consolidated Gold Fields of SA Ltd; 1921-22 Sec to Rhodes Trustees, 1925 Trustee.

**DOVE, John** (1872-1934): s of John Matthew Dove (Managing Director of Liverpool, London & Globe Insurance Co); never married. Educ Rugby, New College Oxford (Greats); 1898 called to Bar; 1903-05 Asst, 1905-07 Town Clerk, Johannesburg; 1907-11 Chairman, Transvaal Land Settlement Board; 1917-18 member War Office Intelligence Dept; 1918-20 Director, Commonwealth Trust Ltd; *Round Table* editor 1920-34.

**DUNCAN, Rt Hon Sir Patrick** (1870-1943): s of John Duncan, tenant farmer of Banffshire; m 1916 Alice Dold, 3 s (2nd killed in action 1942), 1 d. Educ George Watson's College Edinburgh, Edinburgh Univ, Balliol College Oxford (1st in Greats 1893); called to Bar; KC 1924; entered civil service 1894, private sec to Milner at Board of Inland Revenue; 1901-03 Colonial Treasurer, 1903-07 Colonial Secretary, 1906-07 Acting Lt-Gov, Transvaal; MIA for Fordsburg 1910-20 and Yeoville 1921-36; 1921-24 Minister of Interior, Public Health and Education; 1933-36 Minister of Mines; 1937-43 Governor-General of SA; CMG 1904, GCMG and PC 1937.

**FERTHAM, Hon Richard** (1874-1965): s of Rev Wm Feetham; m 1920 Leila, d of L V Christopher of Ladysmith; 1 s, 2 d. Educ Marlborough, New College Oxford (2nd in Greats 1897); called to Bar 1899; KC 1919; legal staff, London County Council; 1902 Deputy, 1903-05 Town Clerk, Johannesburg; 1905-10 legal adviser to High Commissioner SA; 1907-10 member Transvaal Legis Council; 1915-23 MIA for Parktown; 1916-19 1st Batt Cape Corps (Lt); Judge, Supreme Court Transvaal 1923-30, Natal 1931-39, SA 1939-44; Chairman, Ctee on Functions (India) 1918-19; Chmn, Irish Boundary Commission 1924-25; Chmn, Local Govt Commission, Kenya 1926; Adviser, Shanghai Municipal Council 1930-31; Chmn, Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Act Commission, 1932-35; Chmn, Witwatersrand Land Titles Commission, 1946-49; CMG 1924.

**FRANKS, Rt Hon Sir Oliver Shewell, kt** 1946, Baron Franks of Headington (b. 1905): s of Rev R S Franks; m 1931 Barbara May Tanner; 2 d. Educ Bristol Grammar School, Queen's College Oxford; Fellow 1935-37; Prof of Philosophy, Glasgow 1937-45; Min of Supply 1939-46 (Permt Sec 1945-46); Provost of Queen's College Oxford 1946-48; British Ambassador to Washington 1948-52; PC 1949; Director 1953-75, Chmn 1954-62 Lloyd's Bank; various other directorships; Chmn Commission of Inquiry into Oxford Univ 1964-66, Ctee on Official Secrets Act 1971-72, Ctee on Ministerial Memoirs 1976, Falkland Islands Review Ctee 1982; Provost of Worcester College Oxford 1962-76; Chancellor of Univ of E Anglia 1965-84; CBE 1942, KCB 1946, GCMG 1952, OM 1977, KVO 1985.

**GRIGG, Rt Hon Sir Edward William Macleay, kt** 1920, 1st Baron Altrincham, cr 1945 (1879-1955): b Madras, India; s of Henry Bidewell Grigg (ICS); m 1923 Hon Joan Dickson-Poynder, d of Lord Islington; 2 s (elder John disclaimed title 1963), 1 d. Educ Winchester, New College Oxford (3rd in Greats 1902); staff "Times" 1903; asst editor "Outlook" 1905-06; 1908-14 head of Colonial Dept, "Times"; 1914-19 Grenadier Guards (Lt Col, MC, DSO); 1919-20 Military Sec to Prince of Wales; 1921-22 private sec to Lloyd George; 1922-25 National Liberal MP (Oldham); 1922-25 sec to Rhodes Trustees; 1925-30 Governor Kenya and High Commissioner East Africa; 1932 Chmn, Milk

Reorganisation Ctee; 1933-45 Conservative MP (Altrincham); 1939-40 Parlt Sec to Minister of Information; 1940 Financial Sec, 1940-42 Joint Parlt Under-Sec, War Office; 1944 PC; 1944-45 Minister Resident in Middle East; 1948-54 editor "*National Review*" (from 1950 "*National and English Review*"); CMG 1919, KCVO 1920, KCMG 1926; many pubs.

**HAILEY**, Rt Hon Sir (William) Malcolm, kt 1922, 1st Baron, cr 1936 (1872-1969): s of Hammett Hailey (surgeon); m 1896 Andreina, d of Count Hannibale Balzani; 1 s (killed in 2WW), 1 d (d. 1922). Educ Merchant Taylors, Corpus Christi Oxford (1st in Greats 1894); 1895 joined ICS; 1912-18 Chief Commissioner Delhi; 1916-17 member of Govt of India Reforms Ctee; 1919-22 Finance Member, 1922-24 Home Member, Executive Council; 1924-28 Governor Punjab; 1928-30 and 1931-34 Governor UP; 1930-31 delegate, Round Table Confs; 1935-38 Director, African Research Survey ("*An African Survey*" 1938, revised 1957); 1935-39 member, LNs Permt Mandates Commission; 1937-38 chmn, Air Defence Ctee; 1938-39 chmn Ctee for Co-ordination of Work on Refugees; 1940-41 head of Econ Mission to Belgian Congo; 1946-66 Rhodes Trustee; PC 1949; 1953-56 member General Advisory Council BBC; member of gov bodies SOAS, Int African Inst, Royal Central Asian Soc, Royal African Soc; CIE 1911, CSI 1915, KCSI 1922, GCIE 1928, GCSI 1932, GCMG 1939, OM 1956; many pubs.

**HANCOCK**, Sir William Keith, kt 1953 (1898-1988): b Melbourne; s of Rev Wm Hancock; m 1) 1925 Theaden Brocklebank (d. 1960), 2) 1961 Marjorie Eyre. Educ Melbourne CEGS, Melbourne Univ, Balliol College Oxford (Rhodes Scholar 1922, 1st in Modern History 1923); Fellow of All Souls 1923-30; Prof of Modern History, Adelaide 1926-33, Birmingham 1934-44; 1941 Supervisor of Civil Histories, War Cabinet Office; 1949-56 Prof of British Commonwealth Affairs and Director of ICS, London Univ; 1957-65 Prof of History, ANU, thereafter Emeritus Professor; KBE 1965; many pubs.

**HARLOW**, Vincent Todd (1898-1961): s of Rev Vincent Harlow; m 1924 Margretta Badcock. Educ Durham School, Brasenose College Oxford; 1917-19 Royal Field Artillery; 1923-27 Lecturer in Mod History, Southampton; 1928-38 Keeper of Rhodes House Library; 1930-35 Beit Lecturer; 1938-48 Rhodes Prof, London; 1939-45 Empire Division, Min of Information; 1950-61 Beit Prof; 1950-51 Commissioner for Constitutional Reform, British Guiana; 1951-52 Constitutional Consultant, Sudan; 1958 Anglican Member, British Council of Churches; CMG 1952; many pubs.

**HICHENS**, (William) Lionel (1874-1940): posthumous s of John Ley Hichens of St Ives, brought up by mother Catherine; m 1919 Hermione, d of Rt Hon Gen Sir Neville Lyttelton; 3 s, 3 d. Educ Winchester, New College Oxford; master at Sherborne School; 1899-1900 CIV; 1900-01 Egyptian Ministry of Finance; 1901-02 Town Treasurer, Johannesburg; 1902-07 Colonial Treasurer, Transvaal; 1907 member, RC on Decentralization in India; 1909 Chmn, Board of Inquiry into public services of S Rhodesia; 1910-40 Chmn Cammell Laird & Co (shipbuilders); 1914-18 Chmn, Central Council of Assocn of Controlled Firms; 1915 Imperial Munitions Board, Ottawa; director, English Steel Corp,



London Midland & Scottish Railways etc; member Carnegie UK Trust; pubs on "industrial partnership"; killed in bombing raid on London.

**HODSON**, Harold Vincent (b. 1906): s of Prof T C Hodson (expert on ethnology of India); m 1933 Margaret Elizabeth Honey of Sydney; 4 s. Educ Greshams, Balliol College Oxford; Fellow of All Souls 1928-35; 1930-31 staff of Economic Advisory Council; 1931-34 asst ed, 1934-39 editor *The Round Table*; 1939-41 Director Empire Division, Ministry of Information; 1941-42 Reforms Commissioner, Govt of India; 1942-45 Min of Production; 1946-50 Asst Editor, 1950-61 Editor "*Sunday Times*"; 1961-71 Provost of Ditchley; editor 1973-88, Consultant Editor 1988-93 "*Annual Register*"; many pubs.

**HOLLAND(-MARTIN)**, Robert Martin (1872-1944): s of Rev Frederick Whitmore Holland; m 1897 Eleanor Mary Martin; 6 s; took surname Martin in addition to Holland 1917. Educ Eton, Trinity College Oxford; director Martin's Bank Ltd; director, Union Discount Co of London, Gas Light and Coke Co, Alliance Assurance Co; chmn, Southern Railway; 1903-35 Hon Sec Bankers' Clearing House.

**HOLT**, John Alphonse (1906-68): s of Robert Langstaff Holt; m 1937 Pamela Esther (née Holt); 1 s, 2 d. Educ Radley, Merton College Oxford; served in RA and TA 1938-45 (West Africa, France, Belgium, Germany: MBE); Chmn 1949-67, director 1967-68 John Holt & Co (Liverpool); director, Cunard Steamship Co.

**HORNBY**, Richard Phipps (b. 1922) s of Rt Rev Hugh Leicester Hornby; m 1951 Stella Hichens; 3 s, 1 d. Educ Winchester, Trinity College Oxford (2nd in Mod History, 1948); 1941-45 Kings Royal Rifle Corps; Master, Eton College 1948-50; joined Unilever 1951-52, J Walter Thompson & Co 1952-81 (director 1974-81); 1955 and 1956 unsuccessful Conservative candidate; 1956-74 MP for Tonbridge (Conservative); 1959-63 PPS to Duncan Sandys; 1963-64 junior minister, CRO and CO; 1969-74 member, BBC Gen Advisory Council; 1970-72 member, Ctee of Inquiry into Intrusions into Privacy; 1971-74 British Council Exec Ctee; 1976-83 director, 1983-90 Chmn Halifax Building Society.

**HORSEFALL**, Percy (1888-1965): b Yorks, moved to S Africa at early age; m Educ Victoria College Stellenbosch, Oxford (1st in Greats 1912); 1912-13 Lecturer in Classics, Stellenbosch; 1913-19 private sec to Governor-General and High Commissioner SA; 1919-28 employed by English Electric Co Ltd (asst Managing Director 1926-28, non-executive director from 1930); director of subsidiaries Marconi Wireless Telegraph and Marconi International Marine from 1946; 1930-37 head of Issues Dept, 1937-47 Managing Director, 1947-61 director, Lazard Bros; director, English Electric Valve Co from 1947.

**HOWICK**, Viscount, Charles Robert Grey, succeeded father 1917 (1879-1963): s of 4th Earl Grey; m 1906 Lady Mabel Palmer, d 2nd Earl of Selbourne; 1 d. Educ private; Life Guards; unsuccessful Conservative candidate 1910; 1914-18 served on Western front; landowner/farmer.

**JAMESON**, Rt Hon Sir Leander Starr, Baronet 1911 (1853-1917): b Edinburgh; s of Robert Jameson, journalist; never married. Educ Godolphin School, Univ College London; Qualified as doctor 1877; moved to S Africa 1878; 1889-90 negotiations with Lobengula; 1891-95 administrator, Mashonaland; 1895-96 led Jameson Raid, sentenced to 15 months imprisonment; defence of Ladysmith; 1900-10 member of Cape Legislature for Kimberley, 1904-08 Prime Minister Cape Colony; PC 1907; 1910-12 MLA for Capetown Harbour; returned to England 1912; 1902-13 director, 1913-17 President, British SA Co.

**KERR**, Rt Hon Philip Henry, 11th Marquess of Lothian, succeeded cousin 1930 (1882-1940): s of Major-Gen Lord Ralph Kerr and Lady Anne Fitzalan née Howard (d of 14th Duke of Norfolk); younger bro David killed in action 1914. Educ Oratory School Edgbaston, New College Oxford (1st in Modern History 1904); 1905-08 asst sec Inter-Colonial Council; 1907-08 sec Transvaal Indigency Commission; 1908-09 editor "The State"; 1910-16 editor "The Round Table"; private sec to Lloyd George 1916-21; editor "Daily Chronicle" 1921-22; sec to Rhodes Trustees 1925-39; 1931 Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, 1931-32 Parlt Under-Sec of State for India, 1932 Chmn Indian Franchise Ctee (left Govt over Ottawa agreements); PC 1939; 1939-40 Ambassador to US; CH 1920, KT 1940.

**LESLIE**, Samuel Clement né Lazarus (1898-1980): b Perth, WA; m 1924 Doris Frances Falk; 1 s, 2 d. Educ Melbourne CEGS, Melbourne Univ after war service 1WW, Balliol College Oxford (Rhodes Scholar, DPhil); 1922-23 Lecturer in Philosophy, Univ College of N Wales, 1924-25 Melbourne Univ; 1926 returned to Britain, entered business; 1936-40 Publicity Manager to Gas, Light & Coke Co; Director Public Relations, Ministry of Supply 1940, Home Office 1940-43; 1943-45 Principal Asst Sec, Home Office; 1945-47 Director, Council for Industrial Design; 1947-59 Head of Information Division, Treasury; member, N Ireland Development Council, 1955-65; CBE 1946; some publications.

**LOTHIAN**, 11th Marquess, see KERR.

**LOVAT**, Simon Joseph Fraser, 14th Baron, inherited title 1887 (1871-1933): s of 13th Baron; m 1910 Hon Laura Lister, d of 4th Baron Ribblesdale; 2 s, 3 d. Educ Fort Augustus Abbey School, Oratory School Edgbaston, Magdalen College Oxford; army career (Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, 1st Life Guards, Lovat Scouts), served in SA (DSO, CB), Flanders and Gallipoli (KT, ICMG); 1919-27 Chmn RC on Forestry; 1927-28 Parlt Under-Sec of State for Dominions; 1928-29 Chmn, Overseas Settlement Ctee; 1929-33 convener, Inverness-shire County Council; business interests in South Africa and 132th acres in Scotland.

**MACADAM**, Sir Ivison Stevenson, kt 1955 (1894-1974): s of W Ivison Macadam Prof of Chemistry, Edinburgh; m 1934 Caroline Ladd Corbett of Oregon, US; 2 s, 2 d. Educ Melville College Edinburgh, King's College London, Christ's



College Cambridge; 1914-19 City of Edinburgh Royal Engineers (Archangel 1919); Sec and Director-General R11A 1929-55; Asst Director-General and Principal Asst Sec, Ministry of Information 1939-41; editor, "*Annual Register*", 1947-73; founding President and Trustee, National Union of Students; Deputy President, Victoria League; Council Member and Fellow, King's College London; OBE 1919, CBE 1935, KCVO 1974.

**MACDONALD**, Rt Hon Malcolm John (1901-81): s of Ramsay MacDonald; m 1946 Audrey Fellowes Rowley; 1 d. Educ Bedales, Queen's College Oxford; 1923, 1924 unsuccessful Labour candidate; LCC 1927-30; MP for Bassetlaw 1929-31 (Labour), 1931-35 (National Labour); MP for Ross and Cromarty 1936-45 (Nat Govt); Parlt Under Sec, Dominions Office 1931-35; PC 1935; Sec of State for Dominions 1935-39, Colonies 1935 and 1938-40; Min of Health 1940-41; High Commissioner Canada 1941-46; Gov Gen Malaya 1946-48; Comr-Gen SE Asia 1948-55; High Commissioner India 1955-60; Gov Gen Kenya 1963-64, HC 1964-65; special envoy 1966-69; Rhodes Trustee 1948-57; Chancellor Durham 1970-81, Pres Royal Commonwealth Soc 1971-81 and VSD 1975-81; OM 1969.

**MALCOLM**, Sir Dougal Orme, kt 1938 (1877-1955); s of Wm Rolfe Malcolm (banker) and Georgina, d of Lord Charles Wellesley; m 1) 1910 Dora Claire Stopford (d. 1920), 2) 1923 Lady Evelyn Farquhar, widow of Col Francis Farquhar. Educ Eton, New College Oxford (1st in Greats 1899); Fellow of All Souls 1899; Colonial Office 1900; 1905-10 private sec to Lord Selborne; 1910-11 private sec to Lord Grey, Gov-Gen Canada; 1912 Treasury; 1912 director, 1937 President British South Africa Co; director of numerous other British and SA/Rhodesian companies; 1925-28 Chmn, Ctee on Education and Industry; 1928 member, British Economic Mission to Australia; Vice-Chair, Court of Governors LSE; KCMG 1938.

**MANSERGH**, Philip Nicholas Seton (1910-1991): b Tipperary, Ireland; s of Philip St George Mansergh (landowner); m 1939 Diana Mary Keeton; 3 s, 2 d. Educ Abbey School Tipperary, College of St Columbia Dublin, Pembroke College Oxford; 1937-40 Tutor in Politics; 1941-44 member, 1944-46 Director, Empire Division Ministry of Information; 1946-47 Asst Sec Dominions Office; 1947-53 Bailey Prof of Commonwealth Relations, R11A; member, editorial board "*Annual Register*" 1947-73; Councillor, R11A 1953-57; 1953-70 Smuts Professor, Cambridge, thereafter Emeritus Professor; 1956-62 member, General Advisory Council BBC; 1966-76 member, Advisory Council on Public Records; editor-in-chief, India Office Records on Transfer of Power, from 1967; Master of St John's College Cambridge 1969-79 (fellow 1955-91); OBE 1945; numerous pubs.

**MARRIS**, (Adam) Denzil (1906-1983): s of Sir William Marris; m 1934 B Waterfield; 1 s, 2 d. Educ Winchester, Trinity College Oxford; 1929-39 worked for Lazard Bros & Co Ltd; 1939-40 staff, Ministry of Economic Warfare; 1940-45 War Trade Dept, British Embassy Washington; 1945-46 Principal Asst Sec, FO; 1947, Deputy Leader UK delegation to Marshall Plan and Washington Confs; 1947-71 Managing Director, 1971-73 Director, Lazard Bros & Co Ltd; Director Barclays Bank, English Scottish & Aus Bank, Aus &

**NZ Banking Group, Commercial Union Assurance Co, P & O Steam Navigation Co; CMC 1944.**

**MARRIS, Sir William Sinclair, kt 1919 (1873-1945):** s of Charles Marris (accountant), moved to NZ soon after birth; m 1) 1905 Eleanor Mary Fergusson (d. 1906), 1 s (Denzil Marris), 2) 1934 Elizabeth Wilford Good. Educ Vanganui, Canterbury College, Christ Church Oxford; 1895 ICS; 1896-99 Asst Magistrate UP; 1899-1901 Under-Sec to Governor UP; 1901-04 Under-Sec, 1904-06 Deputy Sec, Home Dept Govt of India; 1906-10 lent to Transvaal (Civil Service Commissioner); 1910-12 Magistrate and Collector Aligarh, UP; 1913-16 Acting Sec, 1917-19 Joint Sec Home Dept Govt of India; 1919-20 Reforms Commissioner, 1919-21 Home Sec, Govt of India; 1921-22 Governor Assam; 1922-28 Governor UP; 1928-29 member, Council of India; 1929-37 Principal, Armstrong (later King's) College, Newcastle and 1932-34 Vice-Chancellor, Durham Univ; CIE 1914, KCIE 1919, KCSI 1921.

**MAUD, Sir John Primatt Redcliffe, kt 1946, Baron Redcliffe-Maud, cr 1967 (1906-1982):** s of John Primatt Maud, Bishop of Kensington; m 1932 Jean Hamilton (professional pianist); 1 s, 3 d (2 surviving). Educ Eton, New College Oxford (1st in Greats 1928), Harvard; 1929-32 Junior Research Fellow, 1932-39 Fellow and Dean, University College Oxford (1932 Rhodes travelling fellowship, studying Johannesburg city govt; 1937-39 Tutor to Colonial Administrative Services Course); 1939-43 Master of Birkbeck College, London; 1941-44 Deputy Sec and Second Sec, Min of Food; 1944-45 Second Sec and Sec, Min of Reconstruction; 1945 Sec, Office of Lord President of Council; 1945-52 Permanent Sec, Min of Education; 1946-50 UK delegate to UNESCO confs; 1952-59 Permanent Sec, Min of Fuel and Power; 1959-61 High Commissioner, 1961-63 British Ambassador, SA; 1963-76 Master of University College Oxford; 1964-67 Chairman, Local Govt Management Ctee; 1966-69 member, RC on Local Govt in England; 1973-74 member, PM's Ctee on Local Govt Rules of Conduct; member BBC Brains Trust and frequent broadcaster; CBE 1942, KCB 1946, GCB 1955; pubs on local govt.

**MESTON, Sir James Scorgie, kt 1911, 1st Baron Meston of Agra and Dunottar, cr 1919 (1865-1943):** s of James Meston (Aberdeen registrar); m 1891 Jeanie McDonald CBE; 2 s (1 surviving). Educ Aberdeen Grammar School, Aberdeen Univ, Balliol College Oxford (ICS probationer 1883-85); 1885 ICS, various posts in NWFP and Oudh (later UP); 1899-1903 Financial Sec to Governor UP; 1905-06 lent to Transvaal (adviser on civil service reform); 1906-12 Sec to Finance Dept, Govt of India; 1912-18 Lieut-Gov UP; 1917 Indian rep at Imp War Conf; 1918-19 Finance Member, Governor-General's Council; 1919 Chairman, ctee on financial relations Govt of India/provinces; 1920-26 Chairman of Governing Body, 1920-43 member of Council, RIIA; 1928 Chancellor, Aberdeen University; 1932 President, Royal Statistical Society; 1936-43 President, Liberal Party Organisation; chairman of 5 companies, director of 9 others; CSI 1908, KCSI 1911; pubs on India.

**MILNER, Rt Hon Sir Alfred, kt 1895, Baron cr 1901, Viscount cr 1902 (1854-1925):** b Giessen, Hesse-Darmstadt; s of Charles Milner (doctor, d. 1882) and Mary Ierne (d. 1869); m 1921 Violet Georgina (widow of Lord Edward

Cecil, sister of Leo Maxse; editor "*National Review*" 1932-48; d. 1958).  
Educ Germany, King's College London, Balliol College Oxford (1st in Greats 1876); 1876 prize Fellow, New College; 1881 called to Bar; 1882-85 staff "*Pail Mail Gazette*"; unsuccessful Liberal candidate, Harrow 1885; 1885-89 private sec to GJ Goschen; 1889-92 Director-Gen Accounts and Under-Sec for Finance, Egypt (wrote "*England in Egypt*"); 1892-97 Chairman, Board of Inland Revenue; 1897-1905 High Commissioner SA, 1897-1901 Governor Cape, 1900-01 Administrator and 1901-05 Governor, Transvaal and ORC; 1905 Rhodes trustee; various City directorships; member, War Cabinet 1916-18 (missions to Russia Jan 1917, Douellens March 1918); 1918 Sec of State for War; 1918-21 Sec of State for Colonies (1919-20 mission to Egypt); 1921 president Tariff Advisory Ctee; 1925 Chancellor-elect, Oxford University; CB 1894, KCB 1895, GCMG 1897, KG 1921; various pubs.

MORRAH, Dermot Michael MacGregor (1896-1974): s of Herbert Arthur Morrah (novelist and poet); m 1923 Gertrude Ruth Houselander; 2 d. Educ Winchester, New College Oxford (1st in Modern History 1921); 1915-19 Royal Engineers (Palestine and Egypt); Fellow All Souls 1921; 1922-28 civil servant (Mines Dept); 1928-31 leader-writer "*Daily Mail*"; 1932-61 editorial staff "*The Times*"; editor (part-time) of *The Round Table* 1944-65; from 1945 member, Council of Commonwealth Press Union; 1956-71 Chairman, Press Freedom Ctee; 1961-67 leader-writer "*Daily Telegraph*"; from 1953 *Arundel Herald Extraordinary*; many pubs on royalty.

MORSE, Sir (Christopher) Jeremy, kt 1975 (b. 1928): s of Francis John Morse; m 1955 Belinda Mills; 3 s, 1 d. Educ Winchester, New College Oxford (1st in Greats 1953); Fellow of All Souls 1953-68 and from 1983; joined Glyn, Mills & Co; Director, Bank of England 1965-72; Chmn, Ctee of Twenty, INF, 1972-74; 1975-77 Deputy Chmn, 1977 on, Chmn Lloyd's Bank; director of ICI and other companies; Chancellor of Bristol Univ from 1989; KCMG 1975.

OLIVER, Frederick Scott (1864-1934): s of John Scott Oliver (merchant) and Catherine (d. 1869); m 1893 cousin Katharine Augusta, d of Lord McLaren; 2 s, 1 d. Educ George Watson's College, Edinburgh Univ, Trinity College Cambridge; 1889 called to Bar; 1892 entered Debenham & Freebody; 1906 study of "*Alexander Hamilton*"; 1910 "*Pacificus*" articles on Ireland in "*Times*", and series of pamphlets etc; 1917-18 Sec to Cabinet Ctee on Economic Offensive; later ill-health, retired, 3 volume work on Walpole.

PENSON, John Hubert (1893-1979): s of Arthur A Penson; m 1) 1929 Marjorie Doreen Crawford of Belfast, 1 s, 2 d; 2) 1974 Ellen Mary Cumming. Educ unknown; served in Royal Engineers 1916-19 (MC); civil servant; 1937-41 Commissioner for Finance, Newfoundland; 1944-45 Sec Gen, British Supply Mission, Washington; 1947-53 Attaché, British Embassy, Washington.



**PERRY**, John Frederick, aka Peter, (1873-1935): s of John Perry (small landowner); m 1) Irish wife (separated 1907) 2) Canadian, 2 s, 1 d. Educ Magdalen and New College Oxford (2nd in Greats); 1896 Fellow of All Souls; Colonial Office (SA dept); 1900 seconded to Milner, Asst Imperial Sec, then Imperial Sec; 1903-11 sec, Rand Native Labour Assoc (organised Chinese Labour); 1912- Canadian rep Lazard Bros, director Bank of Montreal and numerous other companies; 1915 member Imperial Munitions Board, Ottawa; returned to England 1932.

**RAISON**, Rt Hon Sir Timothy Hugh Francis, kt 1991 (b. 1929): s of Maxwell and Celia Raison; m 1956 Veldes Julia Charrington; 1 s, 3 d. Educ Eton, Christ Church Oxford; ed staff "Picture Post" 1953-56, "New Scientist" 1956-61; editor "Crossbow" 1958-60, "New Society" 1962-68; MP for Aylesbury 1970-92 (Conservative); junior minister N Ireland 1972-73, DES 1973-74; Min of State, Home Office 1979-83, Foreign Office 1983-86; PC 1982; Chmn, Select Ctee on Educn, Science and Arts 1987-89; Vice-Chairman, British Council 1987-92; Chmn, Advertising Standards Auth Since 1991; Nansen Medal (for World Refugee Year) 1960; many pubs.

**ROBINSON**, (George) Geoffrey, see DAWSON.

**SELBORNE**, 2nd Earl, William Valdegrave Palmer, inherited title 1895 (1859-1942): s of 1st Earl of Selborne; m 1883 Lady (Beatrix) Maud née Cecil (d of 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, sister of Lord Robert Cecil; close interest in early RT, providing many contacts; d. 1950); 3 s (1 killed in action 1916), 1 d. Educ Winchester, University College Oxford (1st in Modern History 1881); private sec to father (Lord Chancellor) then HCE Childers (Sec of State for War, then Chancellor of Exchequer); 1885-86 Liberal MP, 1886-92 Liberal Unionist MP for Petersfield (E Hampshire); 1892-95 Liberal Unionist MP for W Edinburgh; 1895-1900 Under-Sec of State for Colonies; PC 1900; 1900-05 First Lord of Admiralty; 1905-10 High Commissioner SA, Governor Transvaal and ORC; 1915-16 President of Board of Agriculture (resigned over Ireland); 1919 Chairman, Joint Ctee on Indian reforms; 1924-42 Chairman, House of Laity; director of Lloyd's Bank, etc; GCMG 1905.

**STEEL-MAITLAND**, Rt Hon Sir Arthur Herbert Drummond Ramsay-, Baronet cr 1917 (1876-1935): b India; s of Col E H Steel (Bengal Staff Corps); m 1901 Mary, d and heiress of Sir James Ramsay-Gibson-Maitland (changed name on marriage); 2 s, 2 d. Educ Rugby, Balliol College Oxford (1st in Greats 1899, 1st in Jurisprudence 1900); All Souls Fellow 1900; 1902-05 private sec to CT Ritchie then Austen Chamberlain; 1906 unsuccessful Conservative candidate; 1906-07 Special Commissioner to RC on Poor Laws; 1907-10 private sec to Lord Milner; Conservative MP for E Birmingham 1910-18, Erdington 1918-29, Tamworth 1929-35; 1911 chairman Unionist Party; 1915-17 Parlt Under-Sec for Colonies; 1917-19 Head of Dept of Overseas Trade; 1919-24 Managing Director, Rio Tinto Co; PC 1924; 1924-29 Minister of Labour; pub "The New America" (1934) and various articles.

**WADE-GERY**, Sir Robert (Lucian), kt 1983 (b. 1929): s of Prof H T Wade-Gery; m 1962 Sarah, d of A D Marris; 1 s, 1 d. Educ Winchester, New College Oxford (1st in Greats 1951); 1951-73, and 1987-89, Fellow All Souls; 1951 joined Foreign Office (Econ Relations Dept, Bonn, Tel Aviv, Saigon, Cabinet Office); Minister, Madrid 1973-77, Moscow 1977-79; Deputy Sec of Cabinet, 1979-82; High Commissioner to India, 1982-87; Director, Barclays de Zoete Vedd since 1987; Chmn of Governors, SOAS since 1990; CMG 1979, KCVO and KCMG 1983.

**VILLIAMS**, Sir Robin, 2nd Baronet, succeeded father 1954 (b. 1928): s of Sir Herbert Geraint Williams MP; m 1955 Vandy Adele Marguerite Alexander; 2 s. Educ Eton, St John's Cambridge; Royal Artillery; 1952-91 Insurance Broker, 1961- Lloyd's Underwriter; 1954 Chmn Bow Group (Conservative Research Society); 1954 called to Bar; 1969 Chmn Anti-Common Market League; 1973-76 Director, Common Market Safeguards Campaign; 1978-89 Hon Sec Safeguard Britain Campaign, 1989- Campaign for Independent Britain.

**VILMER**, Rt Hon Viscount, Roundell Cecil Palmer, 3rd Earl of Selbourne, succeeded father 1942 (1887-1971): s of 2nd Earl of Selbourne; m 1) 1910 Grace, d of 1st Viscount Ridley, 2 s, 3 d; 2) 1966 Valerie Irene de Thomka. Educ Winchester, University College Oxford; Conservative MP for Newton 1910-18, Aldershot 1918-40; Asst Director, War Trade 1916-18; Parlt Sec Board of Trade 1922-24; Asst Postmaster-Gen 1924-29; PC 1929; Min of Economic Warfare 1942-45; director of Boots and other companies; 1955-59 Chmn of House of Laity; CH 1945.

**VINDHAM**, Hon Hugh Archibald, 4th Baron Leconfield, succeeded brother 1952 (1877-1963); m 1908 Maude Mary Lyttleton, d of 8th Viscount Cobham, no children. Educ Eton, New College Oxford; suffered from tuberculosis; 1901-05 private sec to Lord Milner; 1903 purchased farm at Standerton; 1910-20 MLA for Standerton (Unionist); 1921-23 Jo'burg City Councillor; 1930 returned to England, farmed; various pubs.

**ZIMMERN**, Sir Alfred Eckhard, kt 1936 (1879-1957): s of Adolf Zimmern (merchant); m 1) 1912 unknown American 2) 1921 Lucie Hirsch of Aberystwyth. Educ Winchester, New College Oxford (1st in Greats 1902); 1903-04 Lecturer in Ancient History, 1904-09 Fellow and Tutor, New College; 1912-15 Staff Inspector, Board of Education; 1918-19 staff Political Intelligence Dept, FO; 1919-21 Wilson Prof of International Politics, Univ College of Wales; 1922-23 Prof of Political Science, Cornell USA; 1925-39 Director, Geneva School of International Studies; 1930-44 Montague Burton Prof of International Relations, Oxford; 1943-45 Deputy Director, Research Dept FO; 1945, involved in creation UNESCO; 1947-49 Visiting Prof at Hartford (Conn, USA), settled there; many pubs.



APPENDIX FROUND TABLE AUTHORS (WHERE KNOWN)<sup>1</sup>Vol 1 No 1 (Nov 1910)

[Kerr,] Introductory: Round Table  
 [Kerr,] Anglo-German Rivalry  
 [Marris,] India and English  
 [London gp,] British Politics  
 [Willison,] Affairs in Canada  
 [SA gp,] South African Politics

Vol 1 No 2 (Feb 1911)

[Kerr,] The Anglo-Japanese Alliance  
 [Kerr,] British Politics  
 [Willison,] Canadian Affairs  
 [J C Watson,] Australian Situation  
 [SA gp,] South African Politics  
 [NZ gp,] NZ: History and Politics

Vol 1 No 3 (May 1911)

[Kerr,] New Problem of Imperial Defence  
 [Kerr,] Emigration Question in Japan  
 [Oliver,] 1887 and 1897  
 [Marris,] Hindus and Mohammedans  
 [Willison,] Canadian Affairs  
 [E Scott,] Australian Politics  
 [SA gp,] South African Politics  
 [NZ gp,] New Zealand Affairs

Vol 1 No 4 (August 1911)

[Kerr,] Conference and Empire  
 [B Holland,] Spirit of Coronation  
 [Craik,] Colonial Neutrality  
 [Peel,] Egypt  
 [Oliver,] British Politics  
 [Willison,] Canadian Affairs  
 [E Scott,] Australian Affairs  
 [NZ gp,] New Zealand Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> "Can gp", "Aus gp", etc: author unknown, but article sent by Round Table groups.

Vol 2 No 5 (Dec 1911)

[Kerr,] Britain, France and Germany  
 [V P Johnston,] Congestion of Business  
 [NZ gp,] Defence Policy of New Zealand  
 [Oliver,] United Kingdom  
 [Villison,] Canada  
 [Moore et al,] Australia  
 [SA gp,] South Africa  
 [NZ gp,] New Zealand  
 [Marris,] India

Vol 2 No 6 (March 1912)

[Kerr,] Balkan Danger  
 [Brand,] Lombard St and War  
 [Malcolm,] Declaration of London  
 [Perry,] Early Maritime Confederacy  
 [Oliver,] United Kingdom  
 [Villison,] Canada  
 [MacCallum,] Australia  
 [Tyndall,] South Africa  
 [A R Atkinson,] New Zealand

Vol 2 No 7 (June 1912)

[Marris,] Durbar and After  
 [Brand and Craik,] Home Rule  
 [anon,] Other Irish Question  
 [Aus gp,] Brisbane General Strike  
 [Oliver,] United Kingdom  
 [Villison,] Canada  
 [Latham et al,] Australia  
 [SA gp,] South Africa  
 [Russell et al,] New Zealand

Vol 2 No 8 (Sept 1912)

[Kerr,] India and Empire  
 [Grigg, Perry and Stevenson,] Canada and Navy  
 [Lightfoot,] Labour Movement in Australia  
 [Oliver,] UK  
 [Villison,] Canada  
 [Eggleston,] Australia  
 [SA gp,] South Africa  
 [NZ gp,] New Zealand

Vol 3 No 9 (Dec 1912)

[Craik (based on Percy),] Arbitration and War  
 [Craik and Bonn,] Balkan Crisis: 1. Outlook, 2. German View  
 [Marris and Seton,] India: Old Ways and New  
 [rev: "Dalgety's expert",] Australian Banking and Currency  
 [Oliver,] UK  
 [Willison,] Canada  
 [Eavin et al,] Australia  
 [SA gp,] South Africa  
 [NZ gp,] New Zealand

Vol 3 No 10 (March 1913)

[anon,] Policy and Sea Power  
 [anon,] Unionists and Food Taxes  
 [W P Johnston,] Union of England and Scotland  
 [anon,] Political Crime in India  
 [Oliver,] UK  
 [Willison and S D Scott,] Canada  
 [Aus gp,] Australia  
 [SA gp,] South Africa  
 [NZ gp,] New Zealand

Vol 3 No 11 (June 1913)

[Childs,] Balkan War and Balance of Power  
 [anon,] Ministers and Stock Exchange  
 [Stevenson, rev: Willison and Kylie,] Grain Growers in Canada  
 [de Burgh,] Ethics of Empire  
 [anon,] UK  
 [Can gp,] Canada  
 [Aus gp,] Australia  
 [SA gp,] South Africa  
 [NZ gp,] New Zealand

Vol 3 No 12 (Sept 1913)

[Grigg based on Percy,] "Downing Street"  
 [P E Holland, rev: Marris,] Arya Samaj  
 [Kylie,] New World and Old: Canadian View  
 [Duncan,] South Africa and Native Question  
 [Oliver and Grigg,] UK  
 [Can gp,] Canada  
 [Aus gp,] Australia  
 [SA gp,] South Africa  
 [Duncan et al,] South Africa  
 [NZ gp,] New Zealand

Vol 4 No 13 (Dec 1913)

[Grigg and Craik,] Irish Question  
 [R E Holland, rev: Lovat Fraser,] Islam and Empire  
 [Grant,] Canada and Anglo-American Relations  
 [anon,] UK  
 [Can gp,] Canada  
 [Aus gp,] Australia  
 [Featham,] South Africa  
 [A R Atkinson,] New Zealand

Vol 4 No 14 (March 1914)

[Grigg,] Irish Crisis  
 [Colvin,] South African Strike  
 [Zimmern,] Education and Working Class  
 [Mavor,] New Autocracy in China  
 [Brand,] UK: Kikuyu Controversy  
 [Can gp,] Canada  
 [Aus gp,] Australia  
 [Duncan,] South Africa  
 [NZ gp,] New Zealand

Vol 4 No 15 (June 1914)

[Grigg and Eggleston,] Naval Policy and Pacific Question  
 [Duncan,] Indians and South African Compatriots  
 [SA gp,] South African Constitutionalism  
 [Craik,] UK  
 [Can gp,] Canada  
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**BIBLIOGRAPHY****Abbreviations used:**

<u>CHR</u>	<i>Canadian Historical Review</i>
<u>EHR</u>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<u>FA</u>	<i>Foreign Affairs</i>
<u>HJ</u>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<u>IA</u>	<i>International Affairs</i>
<u>JCPS</u>	<i>Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies</i> (retitled <i>Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics</i> from 1974)
<u>JICH</u>	<i>Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History</i>
<u>NA</u>	<i>Nation and Athenaeum</i>
<u>NR</u>	<i>National Review</i> (later <i>National and English Review</i> )
<u>NZJH</u>	<i>New Zealand Journal of History</i>
<u>PQ</u>	<i>Political Quarterly</i>
<u>QR</u>	<i>Quarterly Review</i>
<u>RT</u>	<i>Round Table</i>
<u>TRES</u>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>

**A) MANUSCRIPT SOURCES**

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Round Table (Office)	Bodleian Library (uncatalogued, transferred 1994)
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Prof Sir Reginald Coupland	Rhodes House
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